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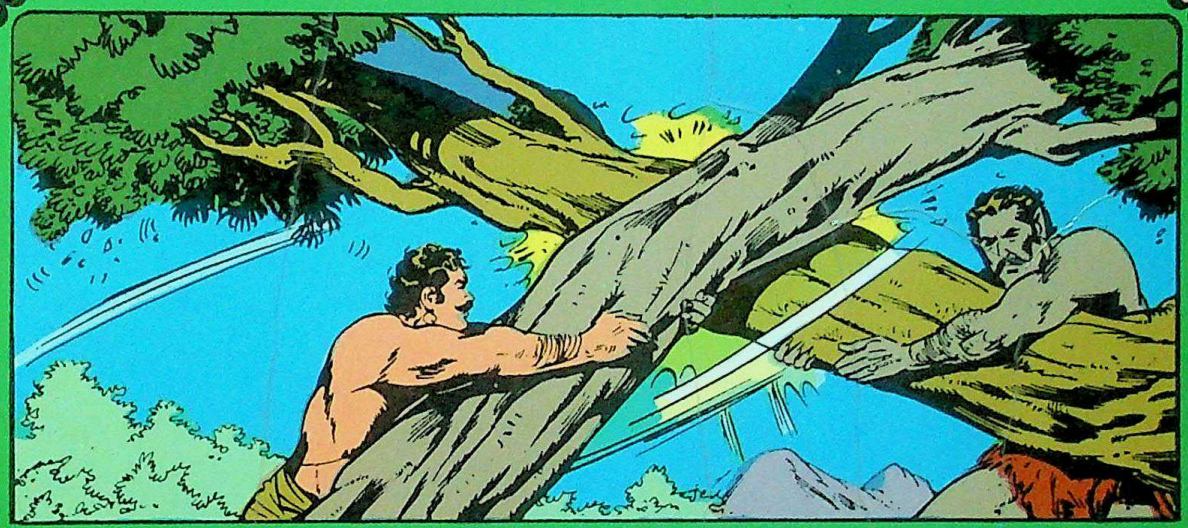
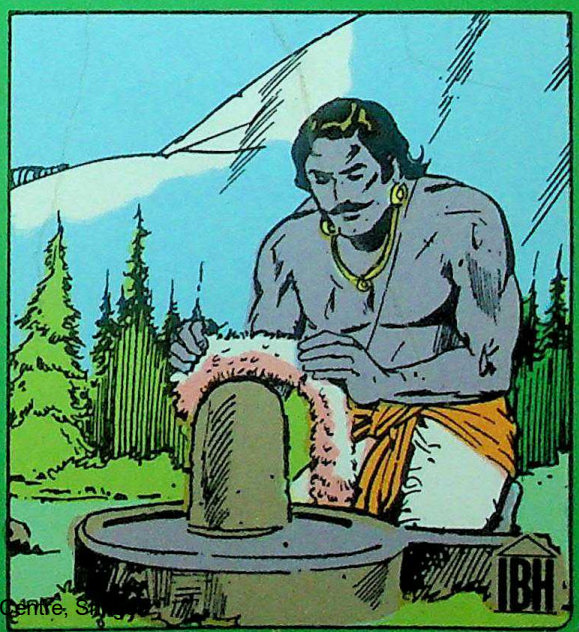
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

MAHABHARATA

BANISHED TO THE FOREST

• THE PANDAVAS IN THE FOREST • ARJUNA'S QUEST FOR WEAPONS • ARJUNA IN INDRALOKA





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BANISHED TO THE FOREST

Veda Vyasa's epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya, a great-grandson of Vyasa, and the many learned sages assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

The earlier volumes of our rendering of the Mahabharata described the ancestry, birth and upbringing of the Kaurava and Pandava princes, the envious attempts by Duryodhana to kill the Pandavas and the marriage of the Pandavas to Draupadi.

Also described was the return of the Pandavas to Hastinapura, the restoration of half the kingdom to them, the subjugation of the other kings by the Pandavas and the Rajasooya Yajna performed by Yudhishthira. The costly game of dice resulted in the banishment of the Pandavas to the forest.

The following three volumes describe the days in the forest and Arjuna's journey to the Himalayas to obtain celestial weapons.

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Mahabharata – 19

THE PANDAVAS IN THE FOREST

TELL ME, O SAGE, HOW MY ANCESTORS, THE VALIANT SONS OF PANDU, REACTED TO THE HUMILIATIONS METED OUT TO THEM. HOW THESE GREAT SOULS, DEPRIVED OF THEIR WEALTH, SPENT THEIR TWELVE-YEAR EXILE IN THE FOREST.

AND HOW THE PRINCESS DRAUPADI WHO HAD ALWAYS LIVED IN LUXURY, COULD BEAR THE HARDSHIP OF FOREST LIFE.

"HAVING BEEN DEFEATED BY THE WICKED SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA IN THE DECEITFUL GAME OF DICE, THE PANDAVAS, WITH THEIR ANGER EVOKED, PICKED UP THEIR WEAPONS AND CAME OUT OF HASTINAPURA, ACCOMPANIED BY DRAUPADI.

"THEY PROCEEDED NORTHWARDS AND FOURTEEN OF THEIR ATTENDANTS, ALONG WITH THEIR WIVES FOLLOWED THEM.

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"ON HEARING THE FATE OF THE PANDAVAS, THE CITIZENS OF HASTINAPURA CAME OUT OF THEIR HOMES. IN THEIR SORROW AND ANGER, THEY DID NOT SPARE IN THEIR CRITICISM EVEN BHEESHMA, VIDURA, DRONA AND KRIPA.

"AND THEY SAID TO ONE ANOTHER:

THE SINNER DURYODHANA, AIDED BY SHAKUNI AND WITH THE APPROVAL OF KARNA AND DUHSHASANA, WANTS TO RULE OVER US.

SO OUR FAMILIES, OUR HOUSES AND BELONGINGS WILL NO LONGER REMAIN PROTECTED.

WHEN AN EVIL MAN WANTS TO RULE WITH THE HELP OF OTHER EVIL MEN, HOW CAN ONE'S FAMILY HONOUR BE GUARDED? HOW CAN OUR HERITAGE, RELIGION AND HAPPINESS BE PRESERVED?

IT IS CERTAIN THAT UNDER DURYODHANA'S RULE, THE WHOLE WORLD WILL COME TO A SORRY END.

SO LET US ACCOMPANY THE KIND-HEARTED, RIGHTEOUS AND VALOROUS PANDAVAS WHEREVER THEY GO.

"SAYING THIS, THE CITIZENS WENT UP TO THE PANDAVAS AND SAID:

WE ARE DISTRESSED THAT YOU ARE BEING BANISHED FROM YOUR KINGDOM THROUGH THE TREACHERY OF YOUR CRUEL ENEMIES.

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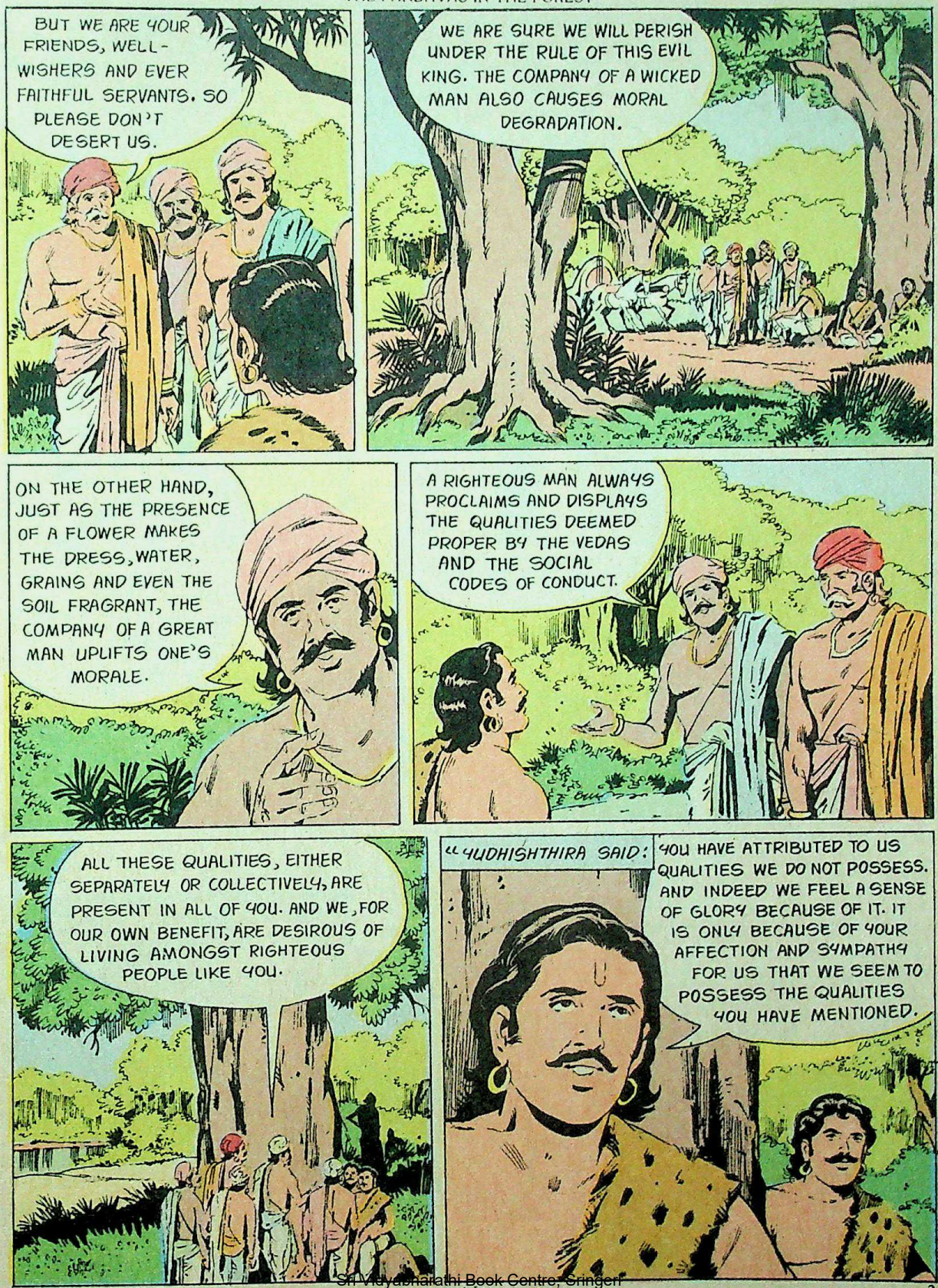

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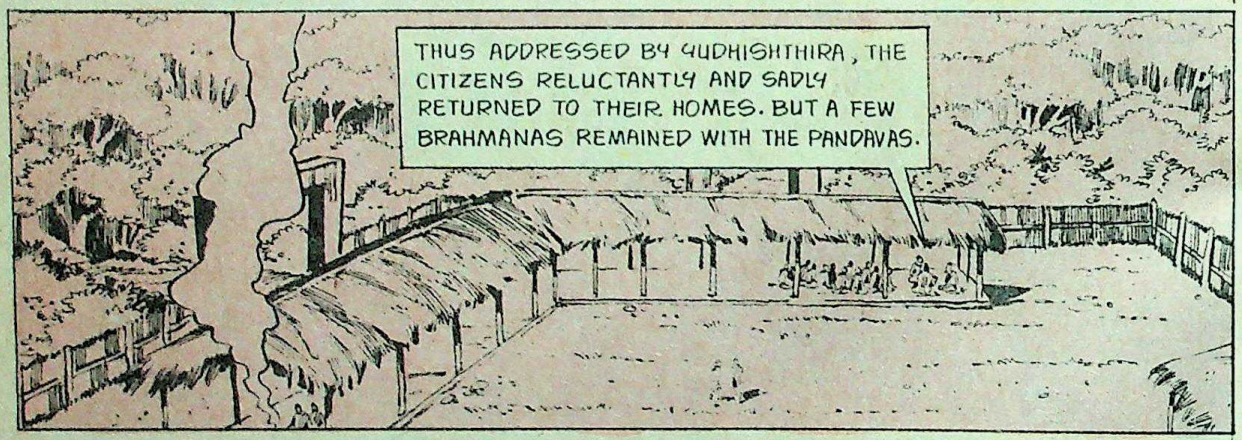

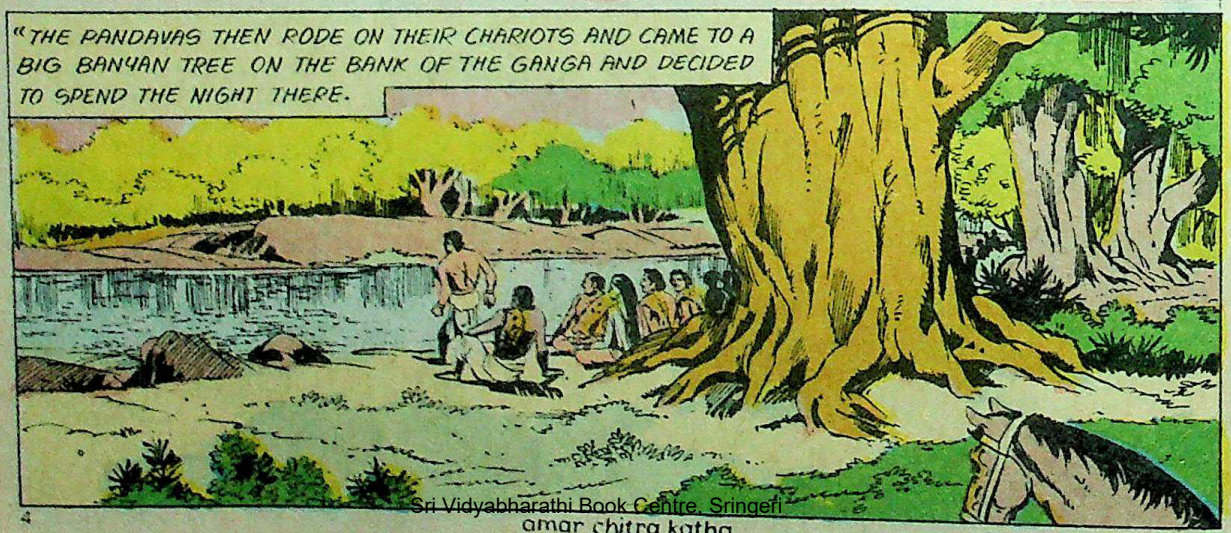

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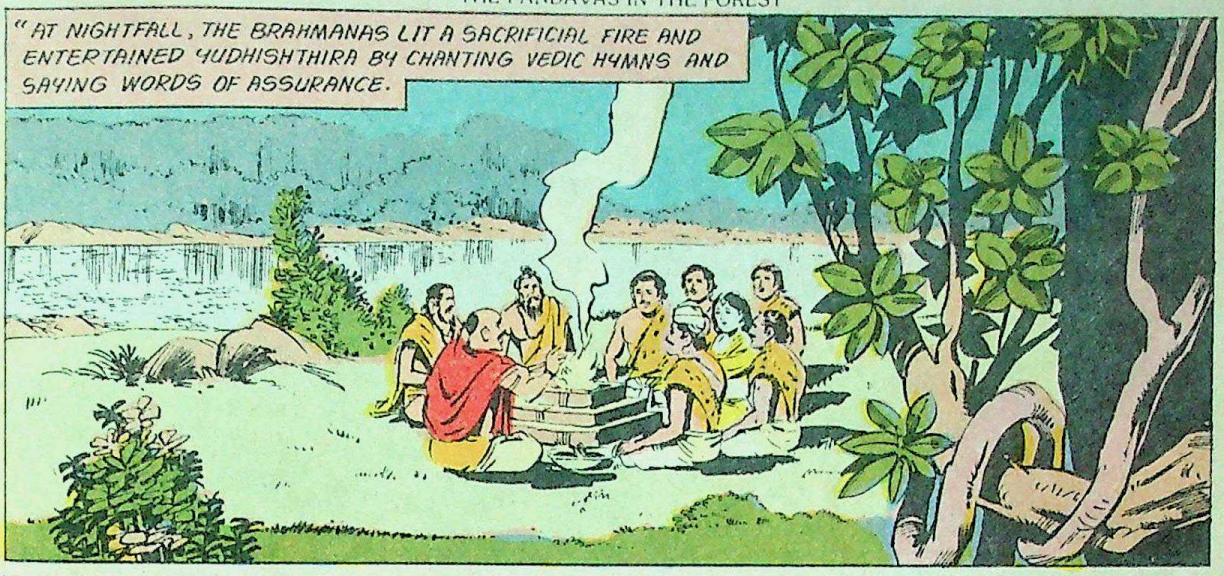

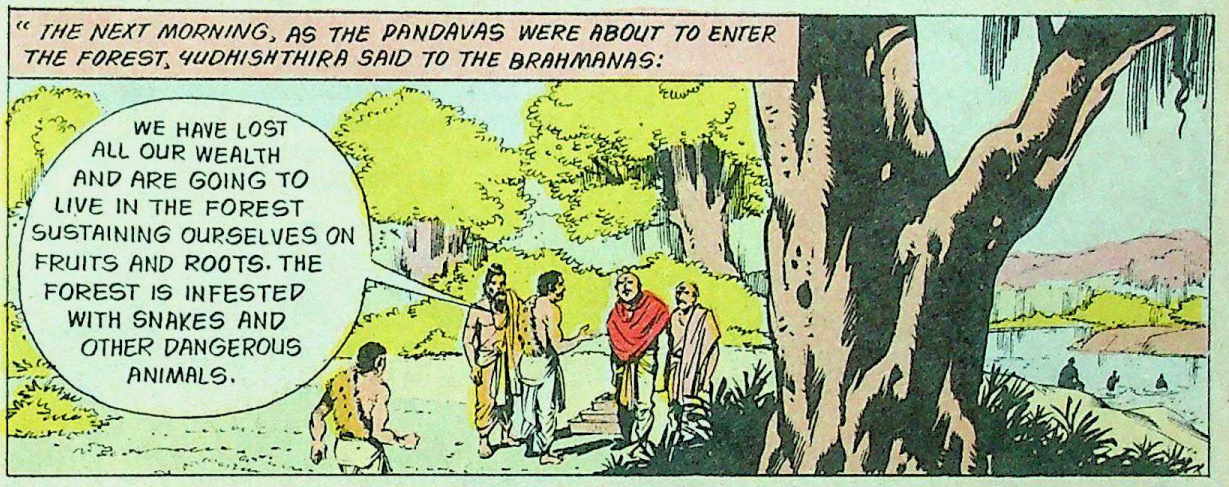

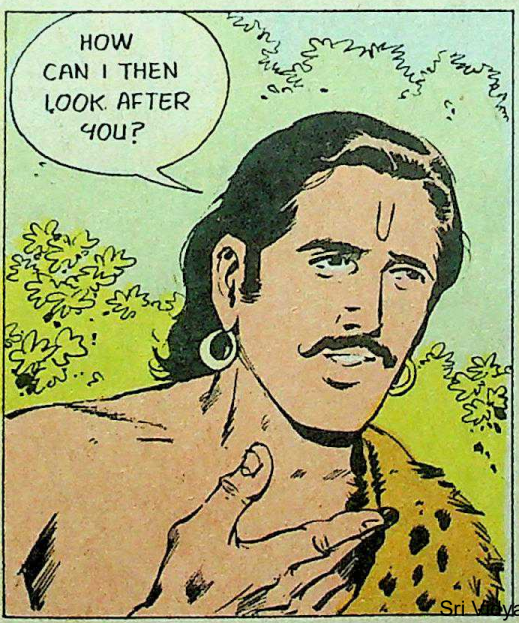

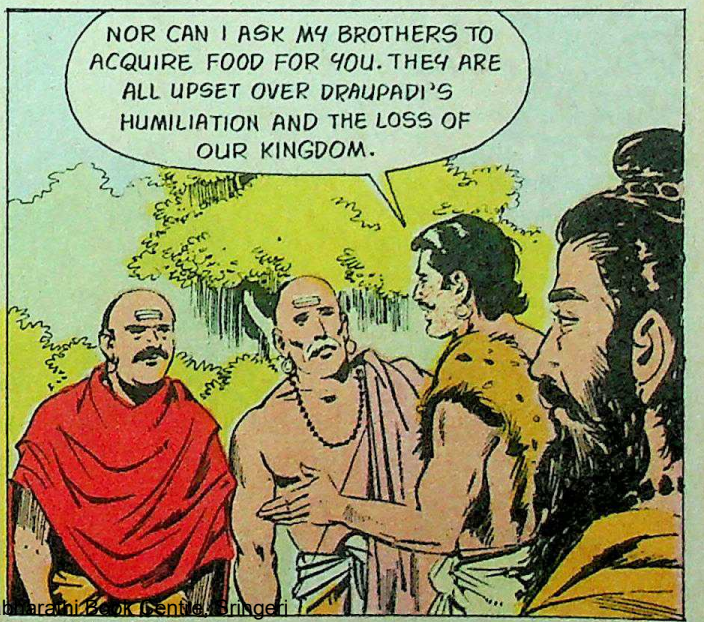

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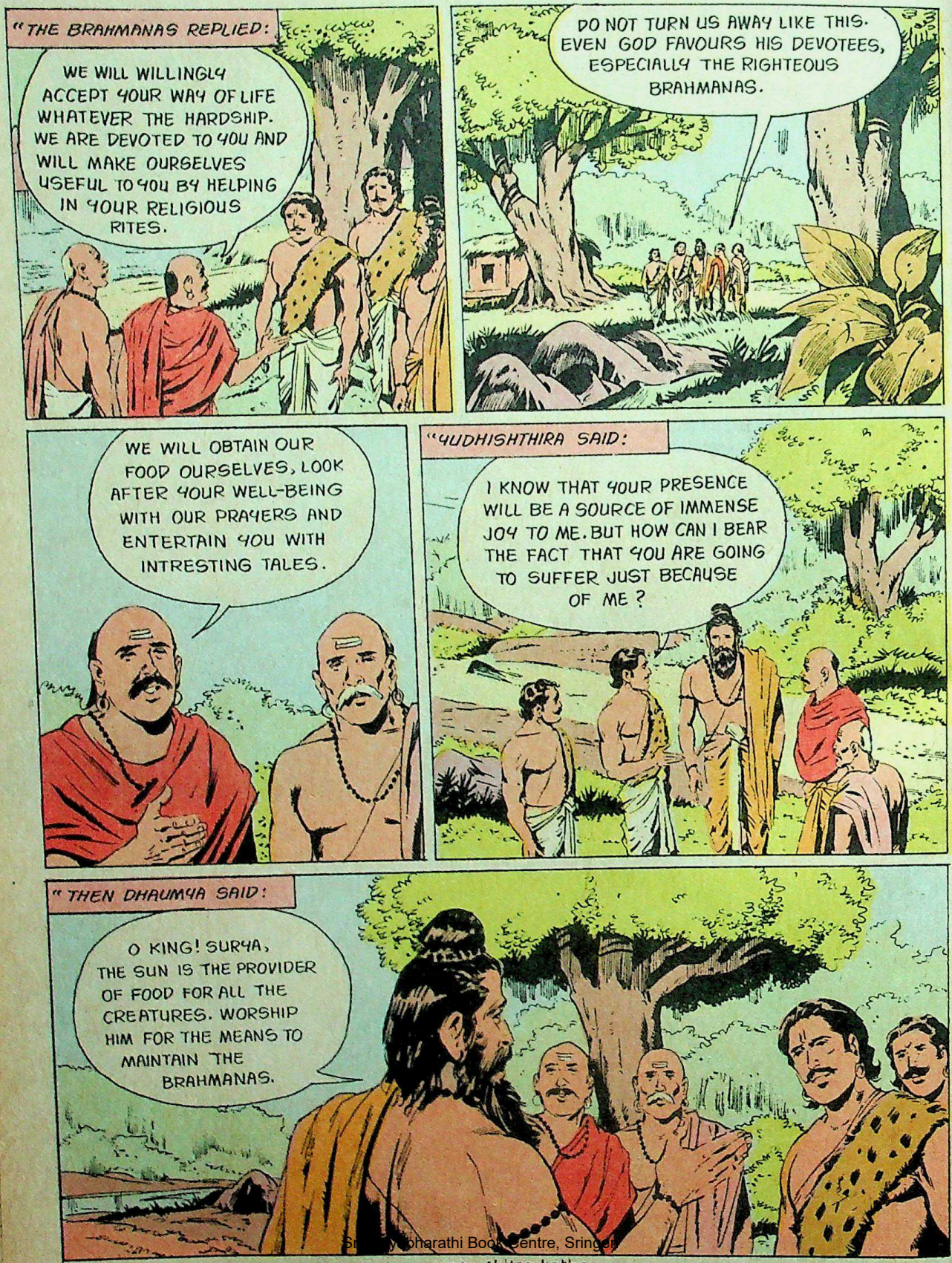

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THUS ADVISED BY DHAUMYA, O MONARCH, YUDHISHTHIRA STARTED HIS AUSTERITIES TO PROPITIATE SURYA.

"STANDING IN THE WATERS OF GANGA, YUDHISHTHIRA FACED THE SUN, CONSUMED NOTHING BUT AIR AND OFFERED PRAYERS WITH FLOWERS AND GRAINS.

YOU ARE THE EYES OF THE UNIVERSE. YOU ARE THE SOUL OF ALL THAT IS LIVING.

ALL THE CELESTIALS FOLLOW YOUR RADIANT CHARIOT IN PURSUIT OF YOUR BLESSINGS.

I TOO BEG OF YOU TO BESTOW ON ME FOOD FOR OFFERING TO MY GUESTS.

"PLEASED BY HIS PRAYERS, SURYA APPEARED BEFORE YUDHISHTHIRA AND SAID:

YOUR DESIRE SHALL BE FULFILLED. I SHALL PROVIDE YOU WITH FOOD DURING ALL THESE TWELVE YEARS.

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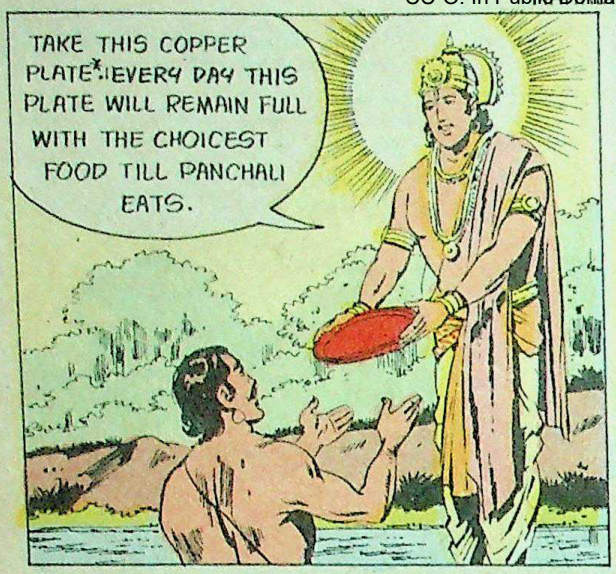

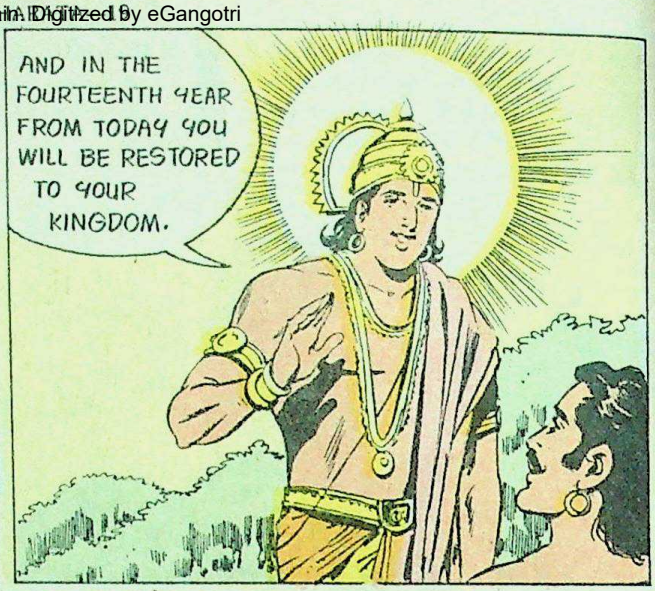

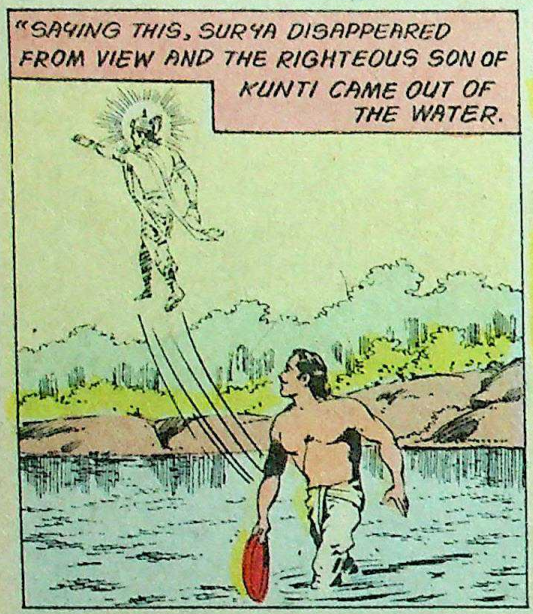

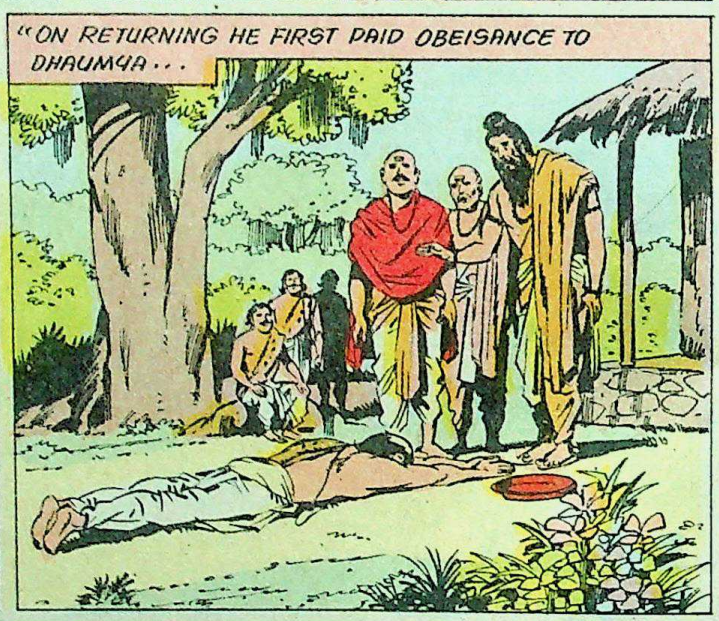

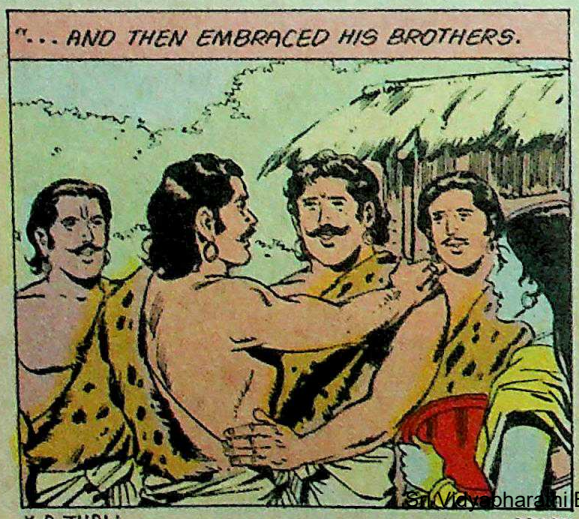

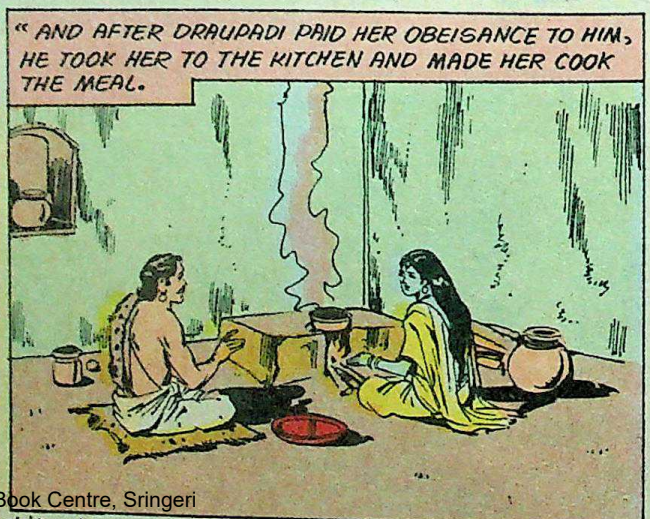

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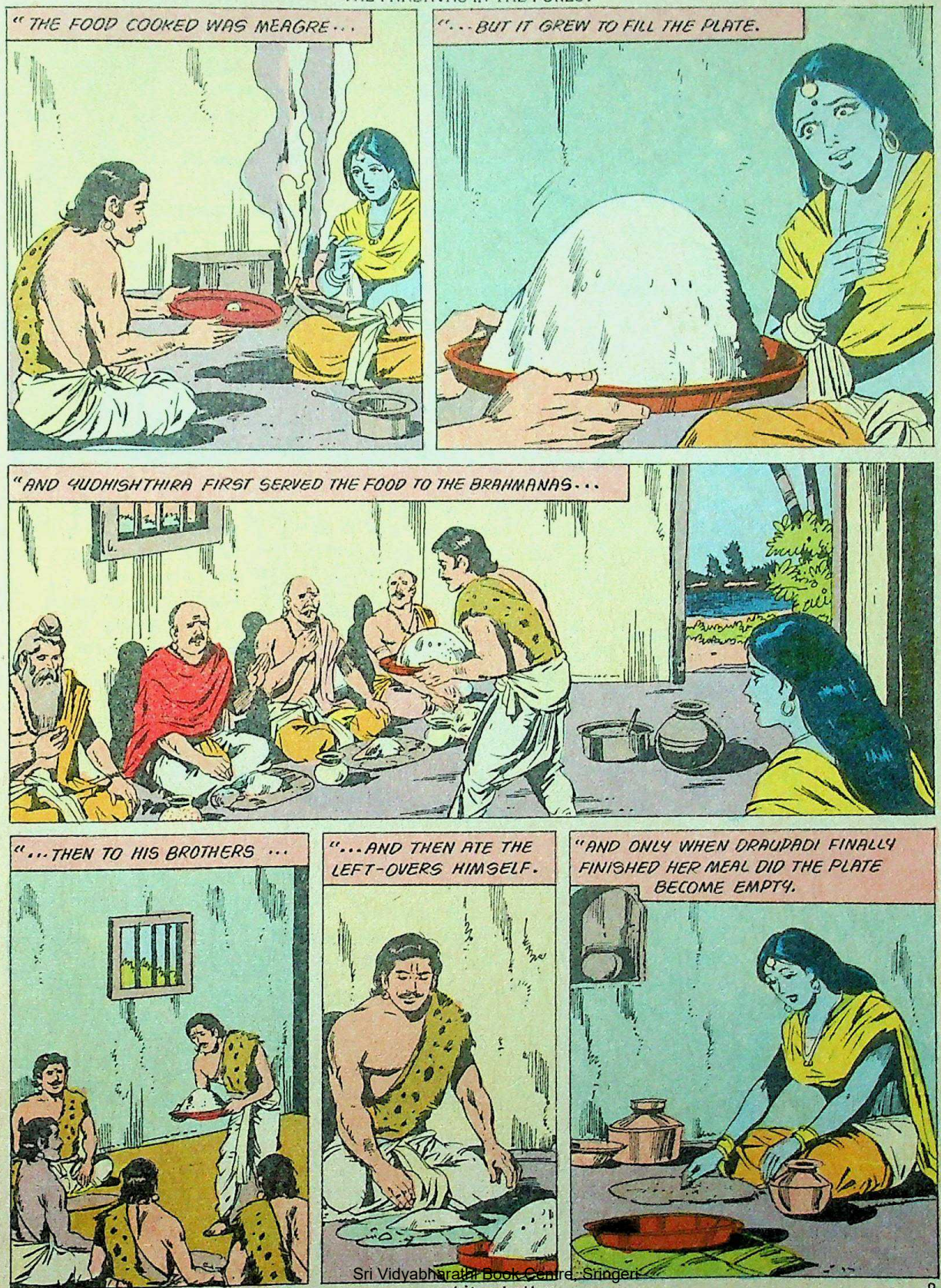

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THUS, WITH THE HELP OF THE BOON FROM THE SUN-GOD, YUDHISHTHIRA, HIMSELF RADIANT LIKE THE SUN, COULD OFFER FOOD REGULARLY TO THE BRAHMANAS. ONE DAY, THE PANDAVAS, DHAUMYA AND OTHER BRAHMANAS PROCEEDED TO THE KAMYAKA FOREST.

"AS THE PANDAVAS WENT TO THE FOREST, DHRITARASHTRA FELT SAD AND SENT FOR THE EVER-INTELLIGENT VIDURA. HE SAID TO HIM:

TO YOU ALL THE KURUS ARE EQUAL. DO OFFER SOME ADVICE WHICH WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO BOTH THE PANDAVAS AND THE KAURAVAS.

TELL ME HOW THE SUBJECTS CAN BE DRAWN TO OUR SIDE...

...AND HOW TO PREVENT THE PANDAVAS FROM OVERTHROWING US.

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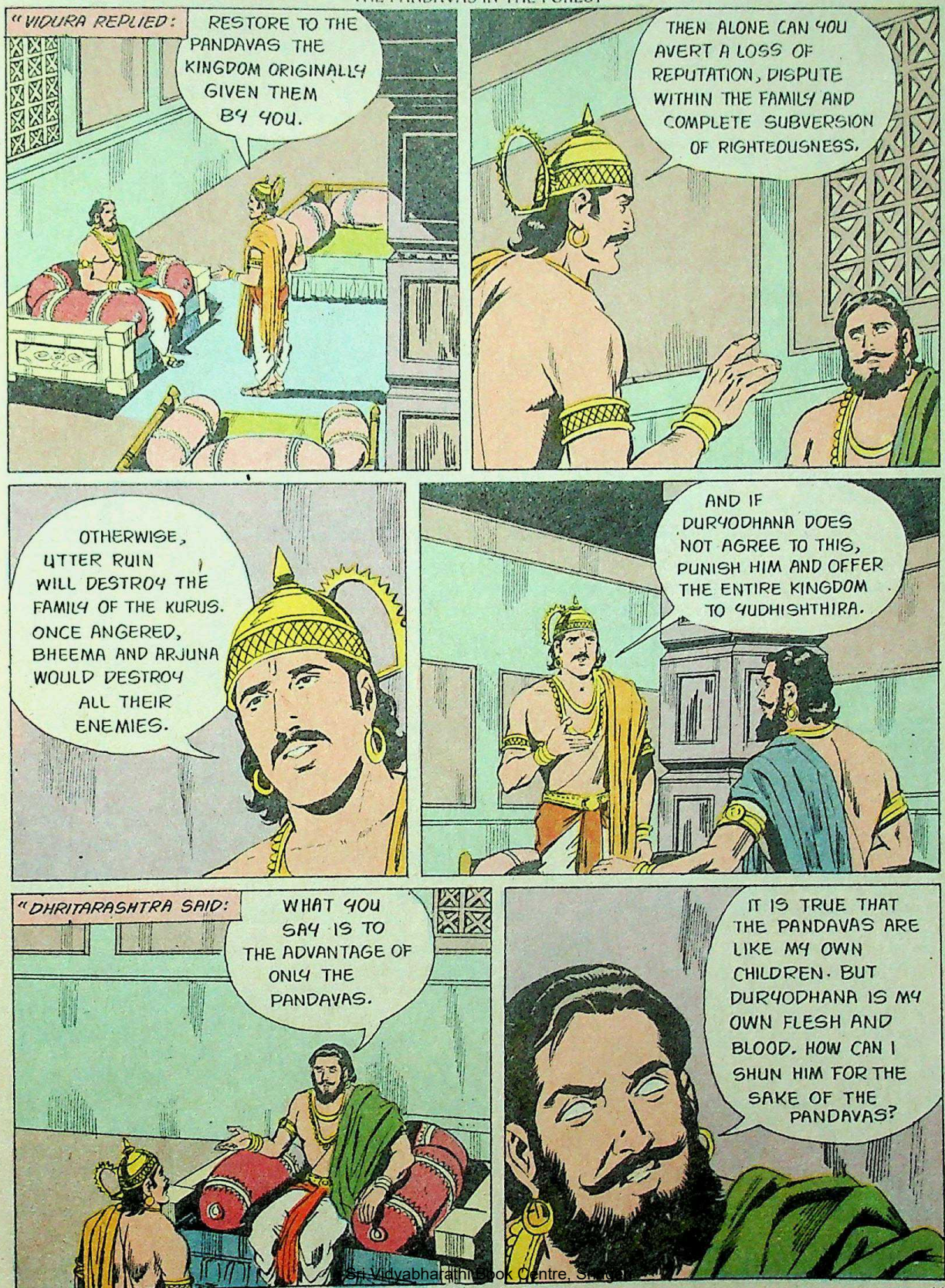

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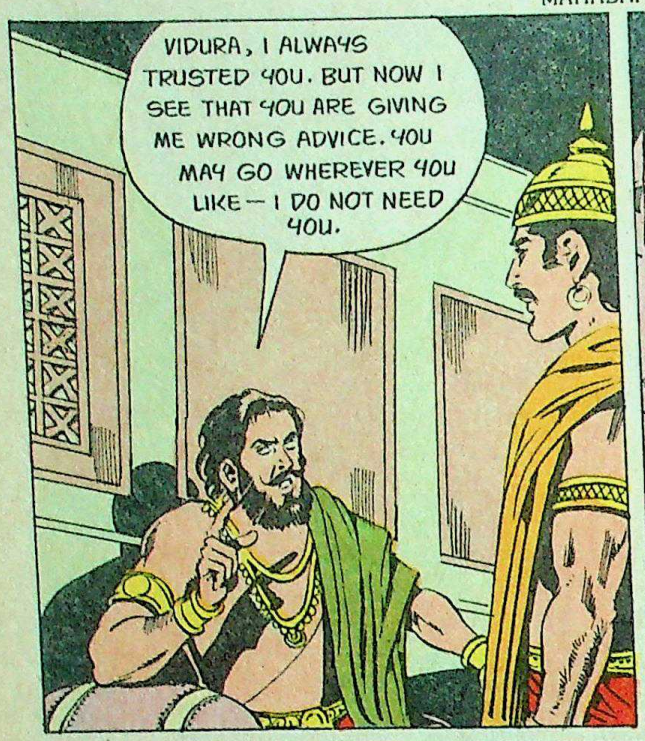

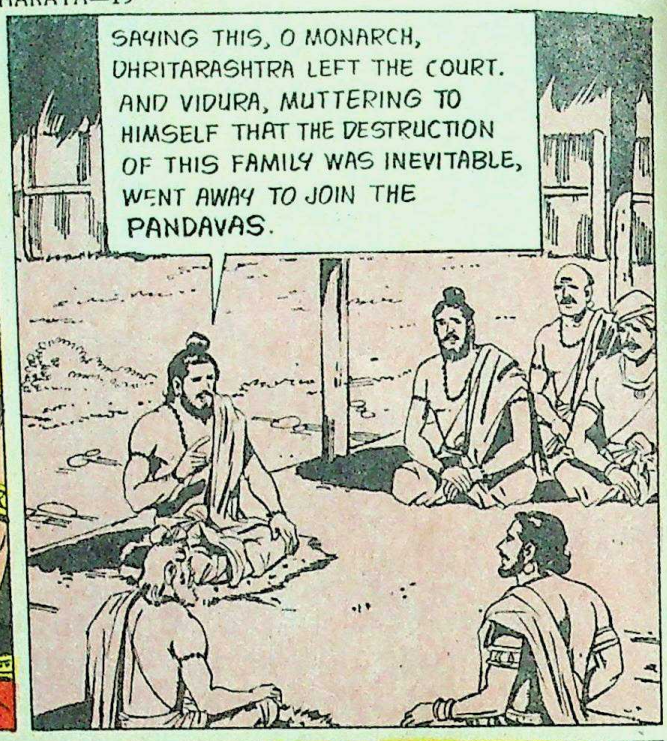

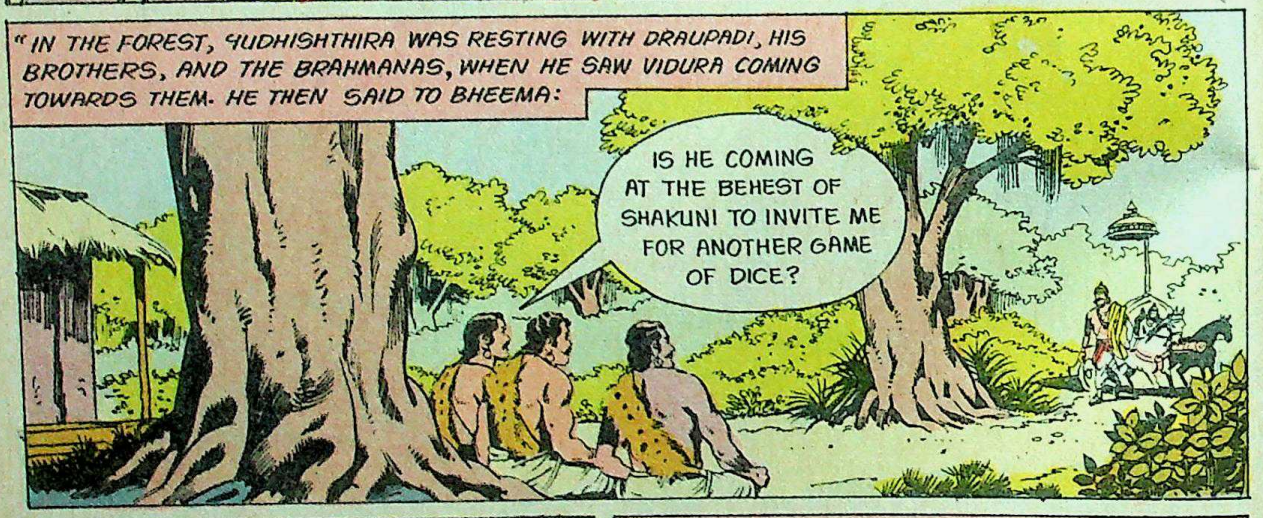

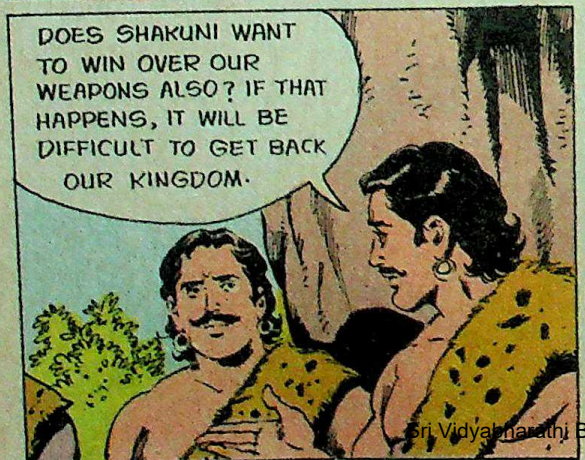

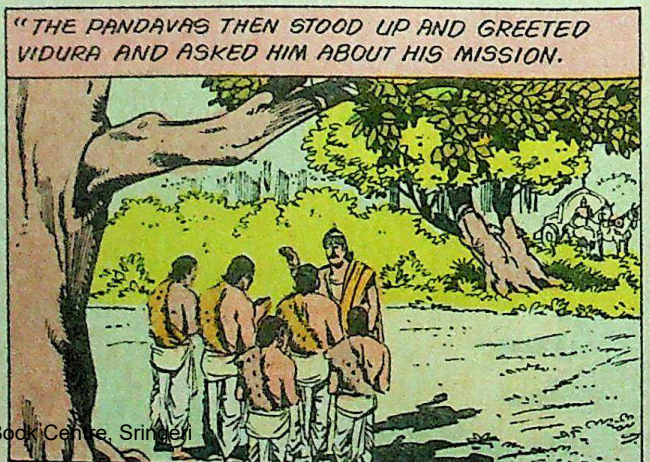

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"VIDURA TOLD THEM ABOUT HIS CONVERSATION WITH DHRITARASHTRA AND SAID:

LIKE AN AILING PERSON WHO LOSES HIS TASTE FOR FOOD, DHRITARASHTRA DID NOT PAY ANY HEED TO MY ADVICE.

NOW LISTEN TO MY ADVICE: ONE WHO FOLLOWS THE PATH OF FORGIVENESS IN SPITE OF GREAT SUFFERING...

...AND SHARES HIS FORTUNES WITH HIS ALLIES, WINS MASTERY OVER THE WHOLE WORLD.

"WHILE VIDURA WAS ENGAGED IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PANDAVAS, SANJAYA, THE MESSENGER OF DHRITARASHTRA, CAME THERE.

"AFTER PAYING OBEISANCE TO THEM AND RESTING A WHILE HE SAID:

O VIDURA! DHRITARASHTRA IS REMEMBERING YOU. SAVE HIS LIFE BY GOING BACK TO HIM.

HEARING THIS, VIDURA TOOK LEAVE OF THE PANDAVAS, AND RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA.

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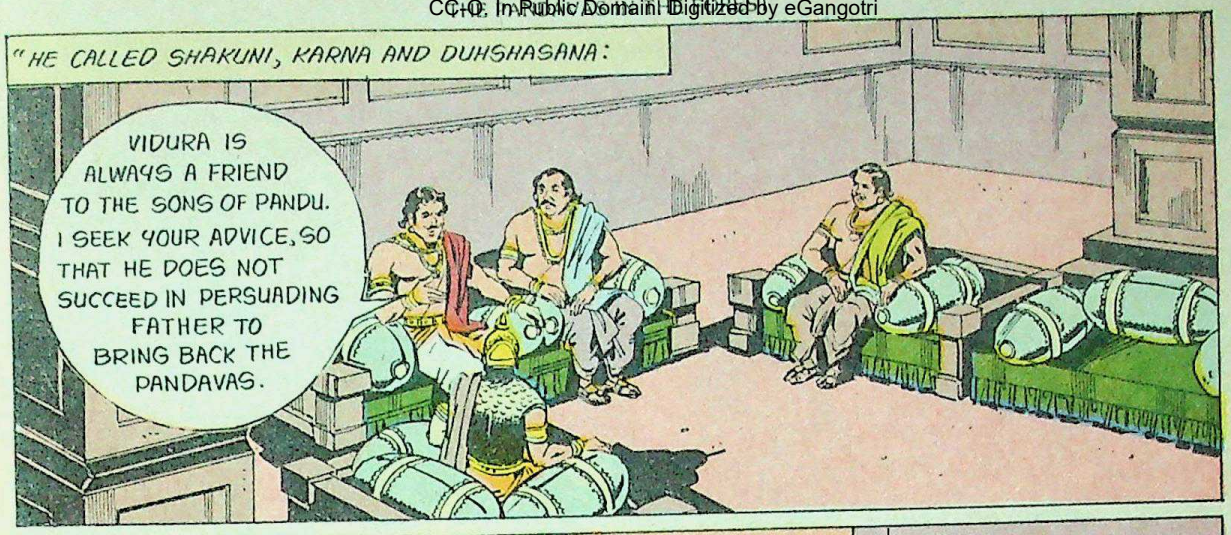

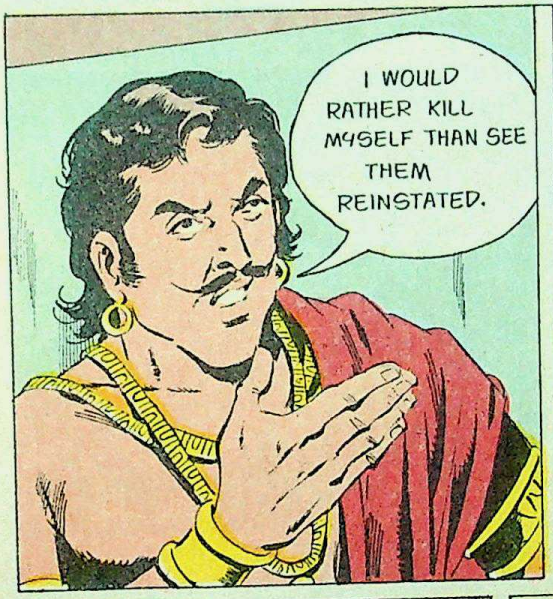

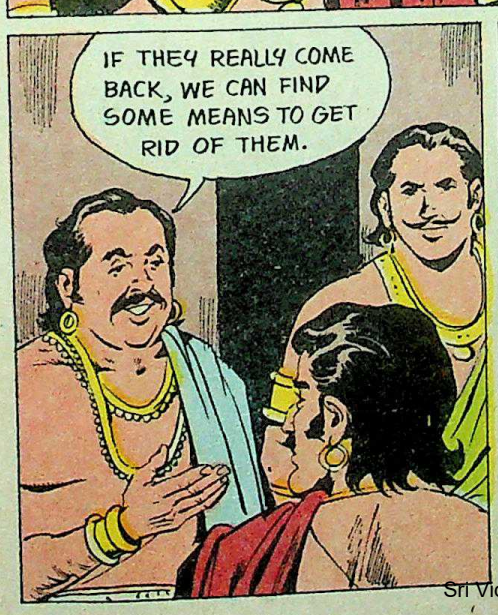

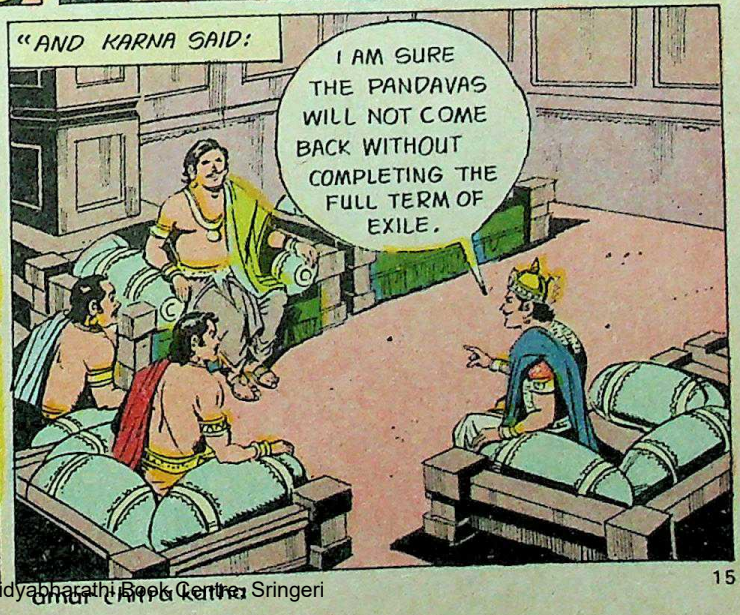

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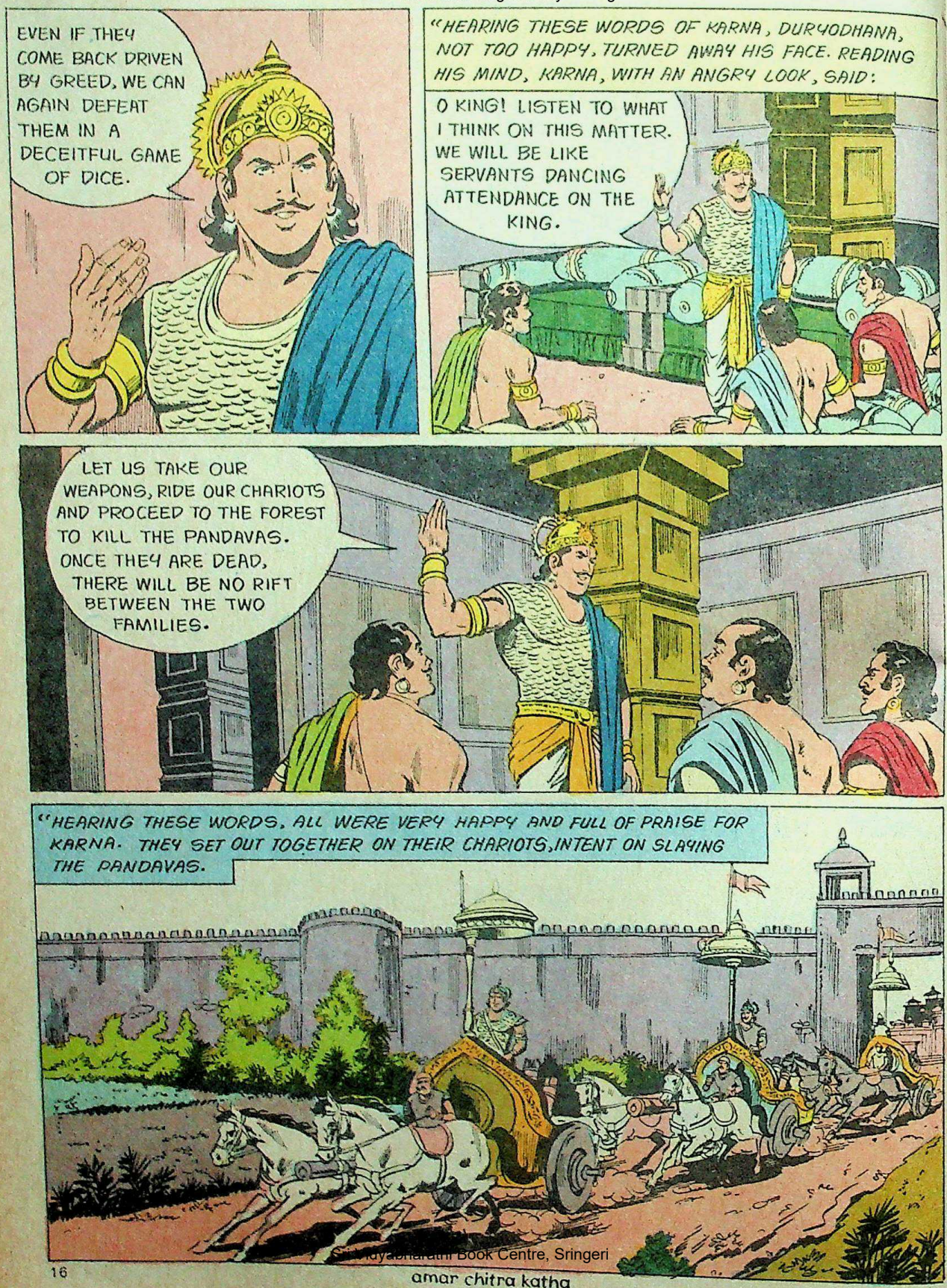

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AS SOON AS THEY STARTED, MY GURU, KRISHNA-DWAIPAYANA DIVINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND HASTENED TO WHERE THE PANDAVAS WERE RESIDING. HE DISSUADED THE KAURAVAS FROM MARCHING ON THE PANDAVAS.

"AFTER THAT HE WENT TO DHRITARASHTRA AND SAID:

I AM MUCH DISPLEASED WITH THE EXILE OF THE PANDAVAS AND THE INSULT HANDED OUT TO THEM. NOW, DURYODHANA MUST PURGE FROM HIS MIND THIS URGE TO KILL THEM. IF HE GOES, HE HIMSELF WILL GET KILLED.

"DHRITARASHTRA SAID:

DUE TO MY AFFECTION FOR MY SON, I AM UNABLE TO SEE WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE KAURAVAS.

WHY DON'T YOU ADVISE ON WHAT IS PROPER TO THE ILL-WILLED DURYODHANA?

"VYASA SAID:

SAGE MAITREYA HAD A MEETING WITH THE PANDAVAS, AND HE IS COMING TO MEET YOU. LET HIM DO THIS.

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SAYING THIS, O KING, VYASA TOOK HIS LEAVE. SOON AFTER THIS MAITREYA CAME AND TOLD DHRITARASHTRA THAT HE LEARNT FROM THE PANDAVAS ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED BETWEEN THEM AND THE KAURAVAS AND THAT HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELL-BEING OF THE KURU RACE.

"HE THEN TURNED TO DURYODHANA AND SAID:

THE PANDAVAS ARE MIGHTY, MATCHLESS WARRIORS, AND RIGHTEOUS AND STEADFAST OF PURPOSE. BHEEMA ALONE HAS KILLED EVIL RAKSHASAS LIKE HIDIMBA, BAKA AND KIRMIRA.

WHO IS A MATCH FOR BHEEMA? MOREOVER, THEY HAVE KRISHNA AS THEIR KIN AND THE SONS OF DRUPADA AS THEIR BROTHERS-IN-LAW.

SO DON'T BE LED ASTRAY BY ANGER. BEFRIEND THE PANDAVAS.

"DURYODHANA DID NOT SAY ANYTHING BUT SLAPPED HIS THIGH IN DEFIANCE.

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"ANGERED, THE SAGE SAID:

THE DISRESPECT YOU SHOWED TO ME AND WHAT I SPOKE SHALL BRING ABOUT YOUR DESTRUCTION. THE MIGHTY BHEEMA WILL BREAK YOUR THIGHS WITH HIS MACE.

"ALARMED, DHRITARASHTRA TRIED TO APPEASE THE SAGE AND PLEADED FOR FORGIVENESS. THEN MAITREYA SAID:

THE SPELL OF MY CURSE WILL BE BROKEN ONLY IF DURYODHANA BEFRIENDS THE PANDAVAS.

DURYODHANA LEFT THE COURT MUCH TROUBLED IN MIND. THEN, TO ASSESS THE MIGHT OF BHEEMA, DHRITARASHTRA DESIRED TO KNOW HOW BHEEMA KILLED KIRMIRA. BUT THE ANGRY MAITREYA LEFT WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING MORE. HOWEVER, VIDURA AGREED TO NARRATE THE INCIDENT.

"VIDURA SAID:

THREE DAYS AFTER THEY LEFT THIS PLACE, THE PANDAVAS IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT, REACHED KAMYAKA, A FOREST INFESTED WITH MAN-EATING RAKSHASAS.

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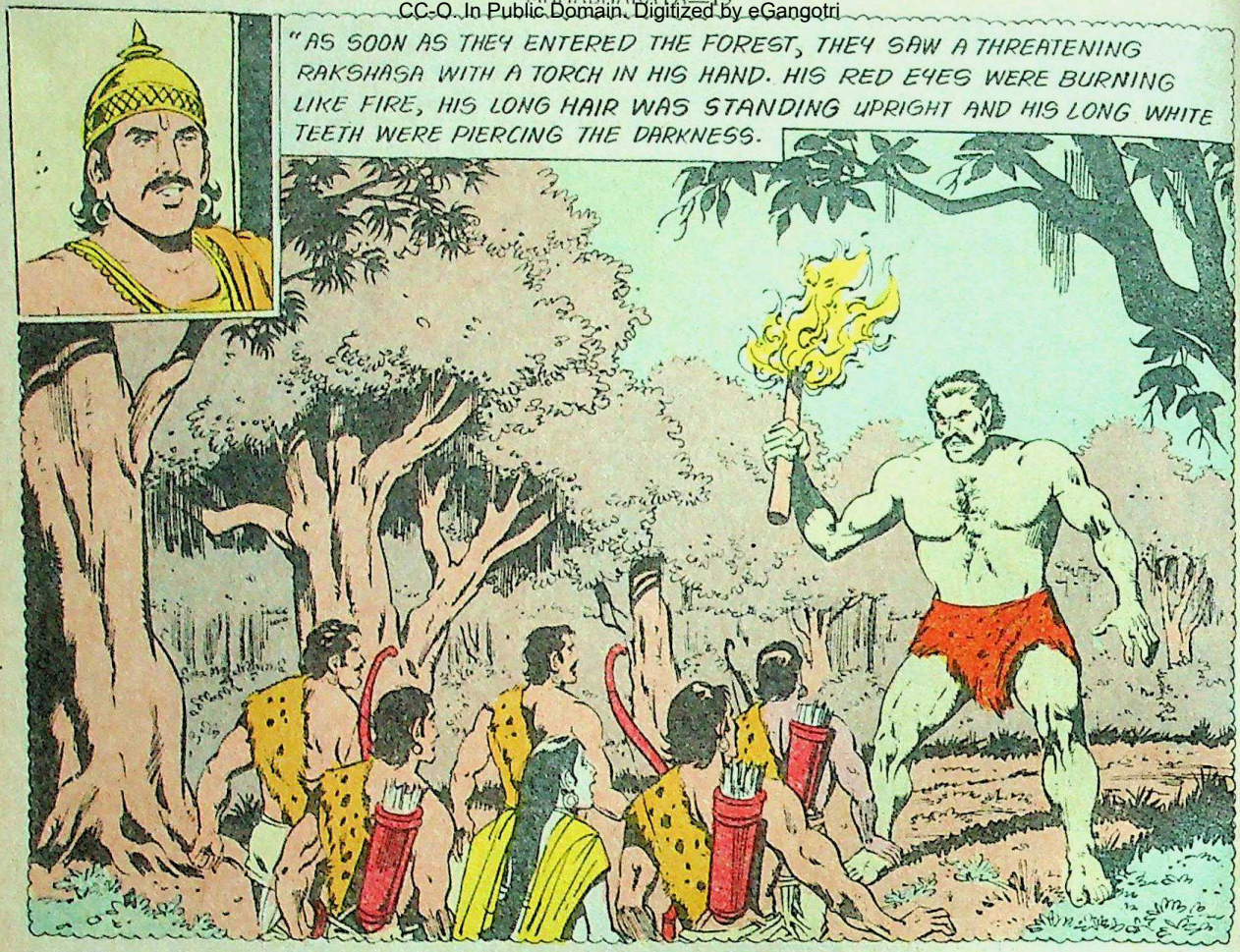

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"THEN THE MIGHTY BHEEMA UPROOTED A HUGE TREE AND REMOVED ALL ITS FOLIAGE.

"ARJUNA ALSO READIED HIS GANDEEVA BOW.

"BHEEMA STOPPED ARJUNA, AND THEN GOING FORWARD HIT THE RAKSHASA ON HIS HEAD WITH THE MIGHT OF INDRA WIELDING HIS THUNDERBOLT.

"UNMOVED, THE RAKSHASA HURLED THE TORCH AT BHEEMA WHO EASILY STOPPED IT WITH HIS LEFT FOOT.

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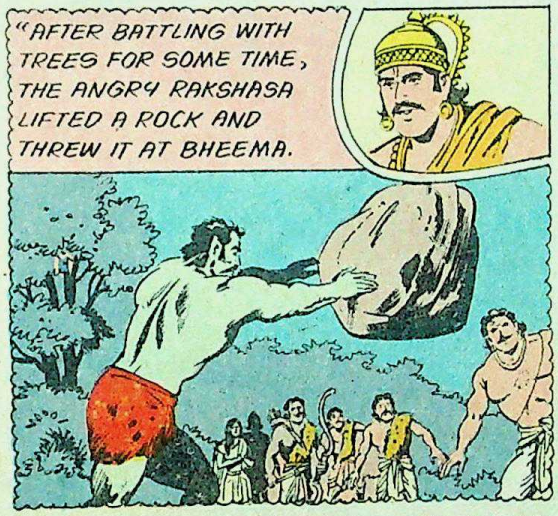
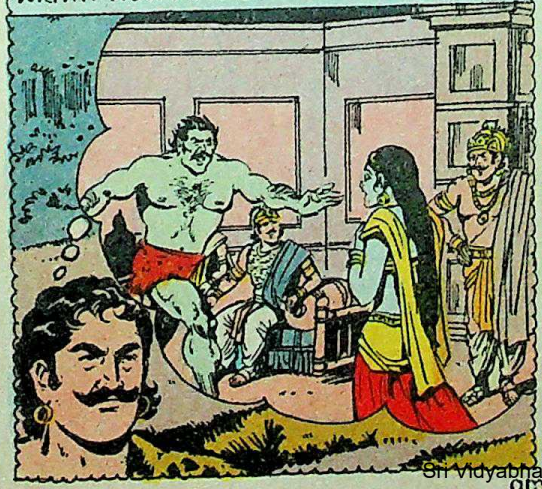
"KIRMIRA TOO UPROOTED A TREE. THE TWO FOUGHT EACH OTHER WITH TREES AS WEAPONS. AND THE TREES BROKE AS REEDS IN THE COURSE OF THE FIGHT.

"AFTER BATTLING WITH TREES FOR SOME TIME, THE ANGRY RAKSHASA LIFTED A ROCK AND THREW IT AT BHEEMA.



"AND SEEING HIM UNDAUNTED, RUSHED AT HIM AND CAUGHT HIM BY HIS ARMS.

"BHEEMA WAS STILL BURNING WITH ANGER BECAUSE OF THE INSULTS HEAPED ON DRAUPADI BY DURYODHANA. HIS WHOLE WRATH NOW FELL ON KIRMIRA.



" HE CAUGHT KIRMIRA BY HIS WAIST AND SHOOK HIM AND THE RAKSHASA TREMBLED LIKE A TREE IN A STORM.

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"AS HE TRIED TO CRUSH KIRMIRA IN HIS ARMS, THE RAKSHASA SCREAMED IN PAIN.

OH-MOH-OTA-OH

"SEEING THAT THE RAKSHASA HAD ALMOST FAINTED, HE PLACED HIS KNEE ON THE WAIST OF KIRMIRA AND STRANGLED HIM.

"VIDURA ENDED HIS STORY:

O MONARCH! ON MY WAY, I SAW LYING THERE THE BODY OF KIRMIRA SLAIN BY BHEEMA. AND I HEARD OF THIS SUPER-HUMAN DEED OF BHEEMA FROM THE BRAHMANAS WHO WERE PRESENT THERE.

HEARING IN DETAIL HOW BHEEMA HAD KILLED KIRMIRA, KING DHRITARASHTRA HEAVED A DEEP SIGH AND BECAME IMMERSED IN THOUGHT.

"ON LEARNING THAT THE PANDAVAS HAD GONE INTO EXILE, THE BHOJAS, THE ANDHAKAS AND THE VRISHNIS CAME TO THE FOREST TO MEET THEM.

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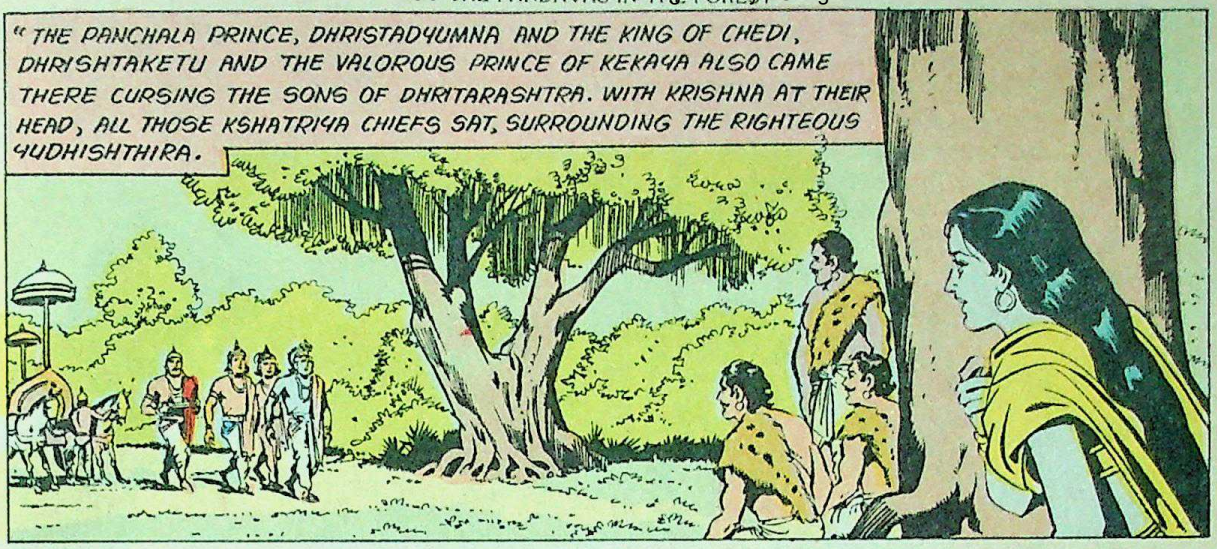

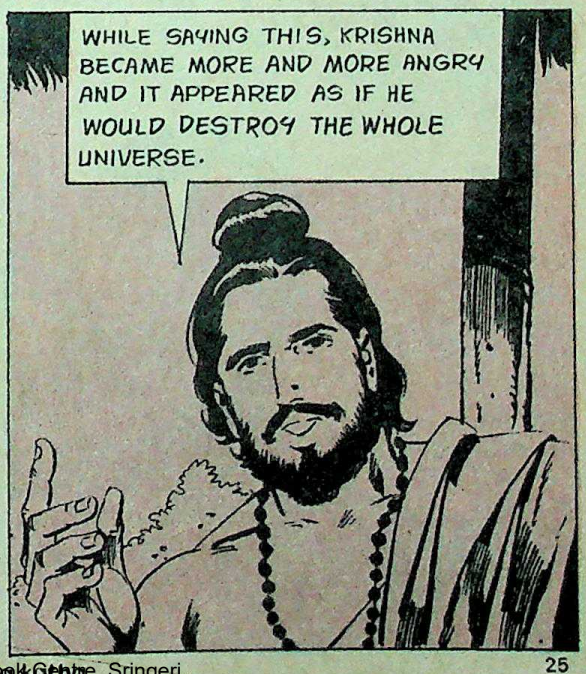

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"THEN ARJUNA RECOUNTED EPISODES FROM KRISHNA'S PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS AND SAID:

YOU ARE THE ALMIGHTY. YOU ARE THE TRUTH, THE LORD OF LORDS AND THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE.

"TO THIS DRAUPADI ADDED –

IMMANENT LORD! IN YOU EVERYTHING IS ESTABLISHED.

THEN, O KRISHNA HOW COULD ONE LIKE ME, THE WIFE OF THE PANDAVA HEROES, THE SISTER OF DHRISHTADYUMNA AND, ABOVE ALL, A FRIEND OF YOURS, HAVE BEEN DRAGGED INTO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KAURAVAS TO BE DISHONOURED?

FOR FOUR REASONS, KRISHNA, I MUST ALWAYS BE PROTECTED BY YOU: FOR KINSHIP, FOR HONOUR, FOR FRIENDSHIP AND, ABOVE ALL, YOU ARE THE ALL-POWERFUL LORD, KRISHNA.

"KRISHNA SAID:

DO NOT GRIEVE. I PROMISE YOU THIS; YOU WILL BECOME THE QUEEN OF KINGS.

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"TURNING TO YUDHISHTHIRA, KRISHNA SAID:

IF I HAD BEEN PRESENT IN DWARAKA THEN, I WOULD HAVE STOPPED THE GAME OF DICE BEING PLAYED. WOMEN, GAMBLING, HUNTING AND DRINKING—THESE ARE THE FOUR VICES BORN OUT OF PASSION.

AFTER KRISHNA AND OTHERS HAD LEFT, THE PANDAVAS MOVED TO DWAITAVANA FOR SPENDING THEIR TWELVE YEARS OF EXILE. MANY SAGES AND THE FOREST-DWELLERS THRONGED THERE TO MEET THE PANDAVAS.

"ONE EVENING, THE PANDAVAS WERE DISCUSSING THEIR STATE OF AFFAIRS WHEN THE BEAUTIFUL DRAUPADI SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA:

THE WICKED DURYODHANA HAS MADE US HOMELESS AND REDUCED US INTO INHABITANTS OF FOREST WITH ONLY DEER-SKIN TO WEAR. ISN'T YOUR MIND PAINED ON SEEING US THUS?

HOW IS IT THAT YOU DO NOT NURSE ANY ANGER AGAINST DURYODHANA?

IT IS CONTRARY TO THE NATURE OF A KSHATRIYA.

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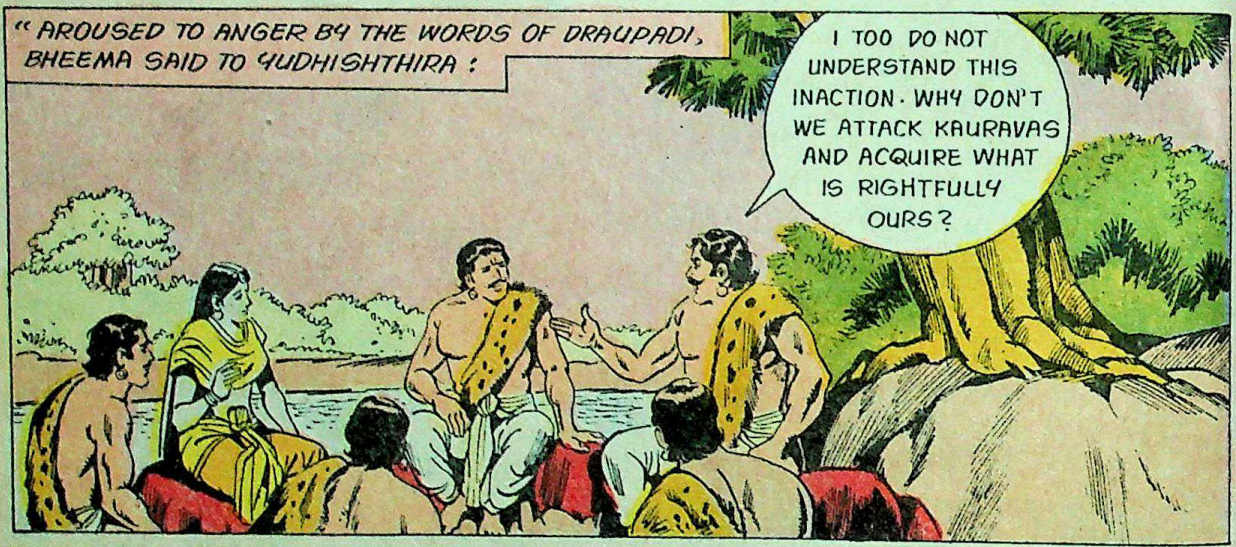

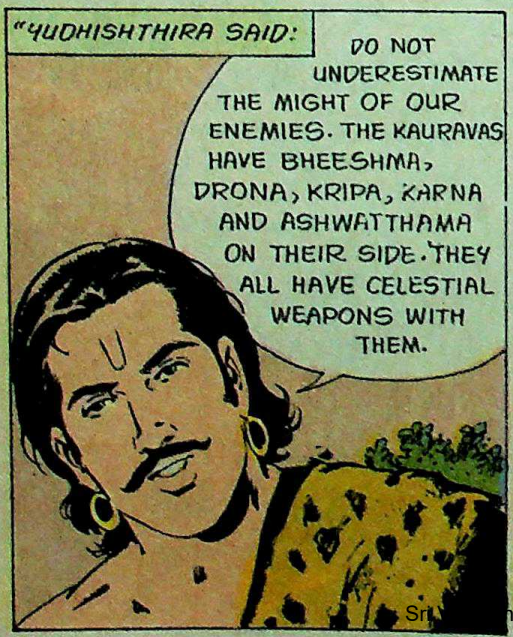

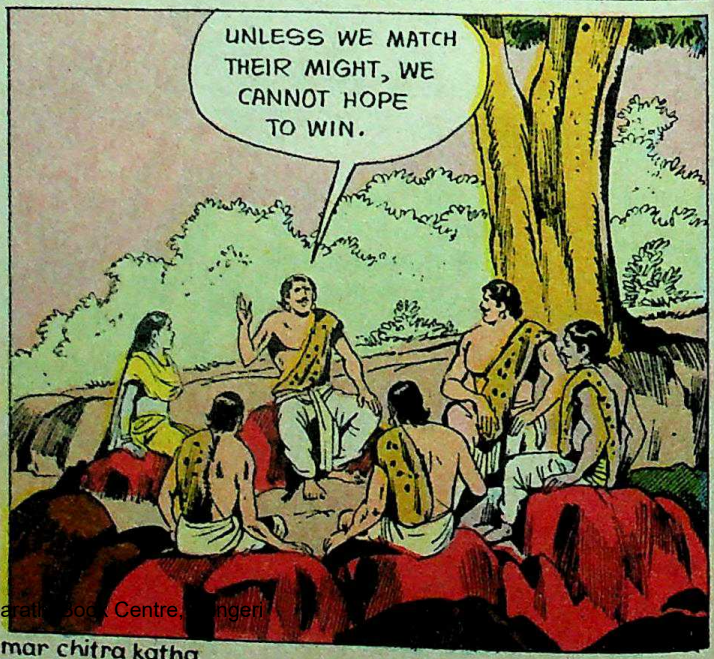

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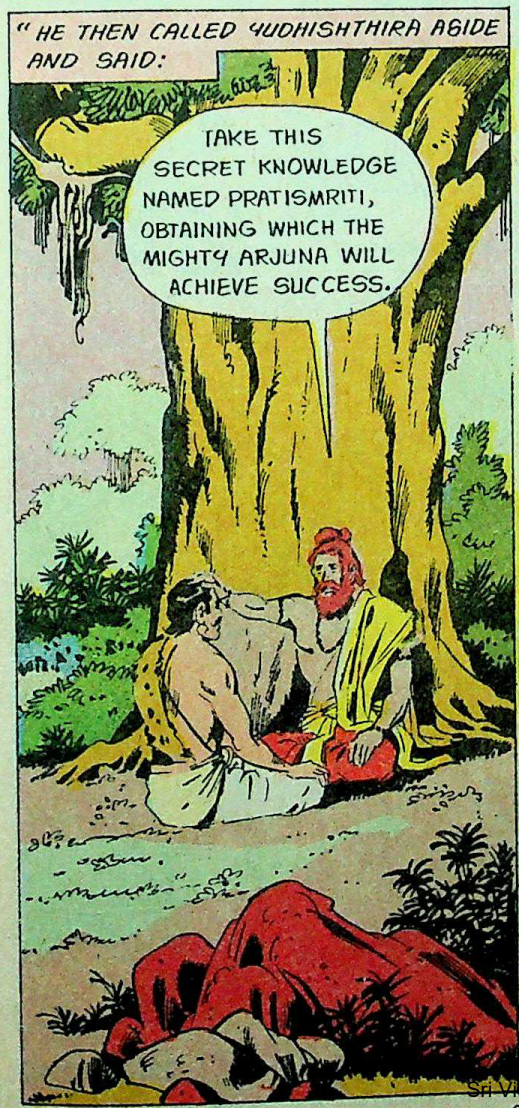

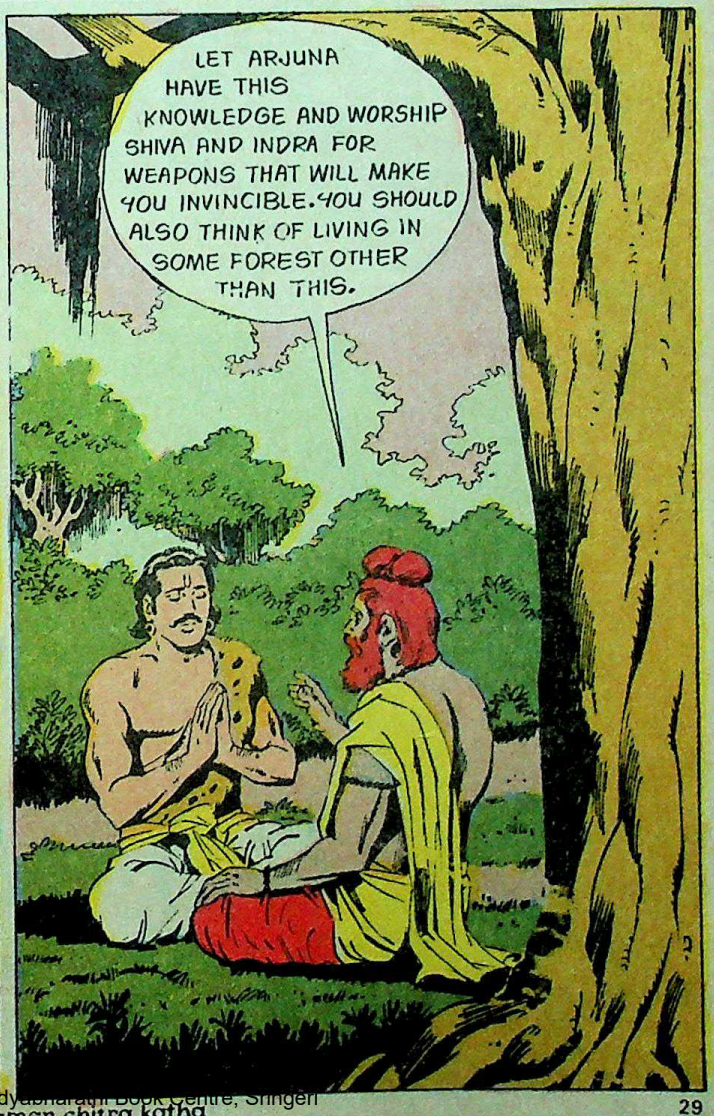

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"AFTER IMPARTING THUS THE YOGA VIDYA, VYASA DISAPPEARED. THE RIGHTEOUS YUDHISHTHIRA WENT FROM THE DVAITA TO THE FOREST KNOWN AS KAMYAKA ON THE BANKS OF THE SARASWATI.

"THEN, REMEMBERING THE SAGE'S ADVICE, YUDHISHTHIRA CALLED ARJUNA TO HIS SIDE AND SAID:

BHEESHMA, DRONA, KRIPA, KARNA AND ASHWATTHAMA ARE PROFICIENT IN WEAPONRY. AND THEY ARE ALL BEING LOOKED AFTER WELL BY DURYODHANA.

SO, WHEN THE NEED ARISES THEY WON'T HESITATE TO SHOW THEIR MIGHT AGAINST US.

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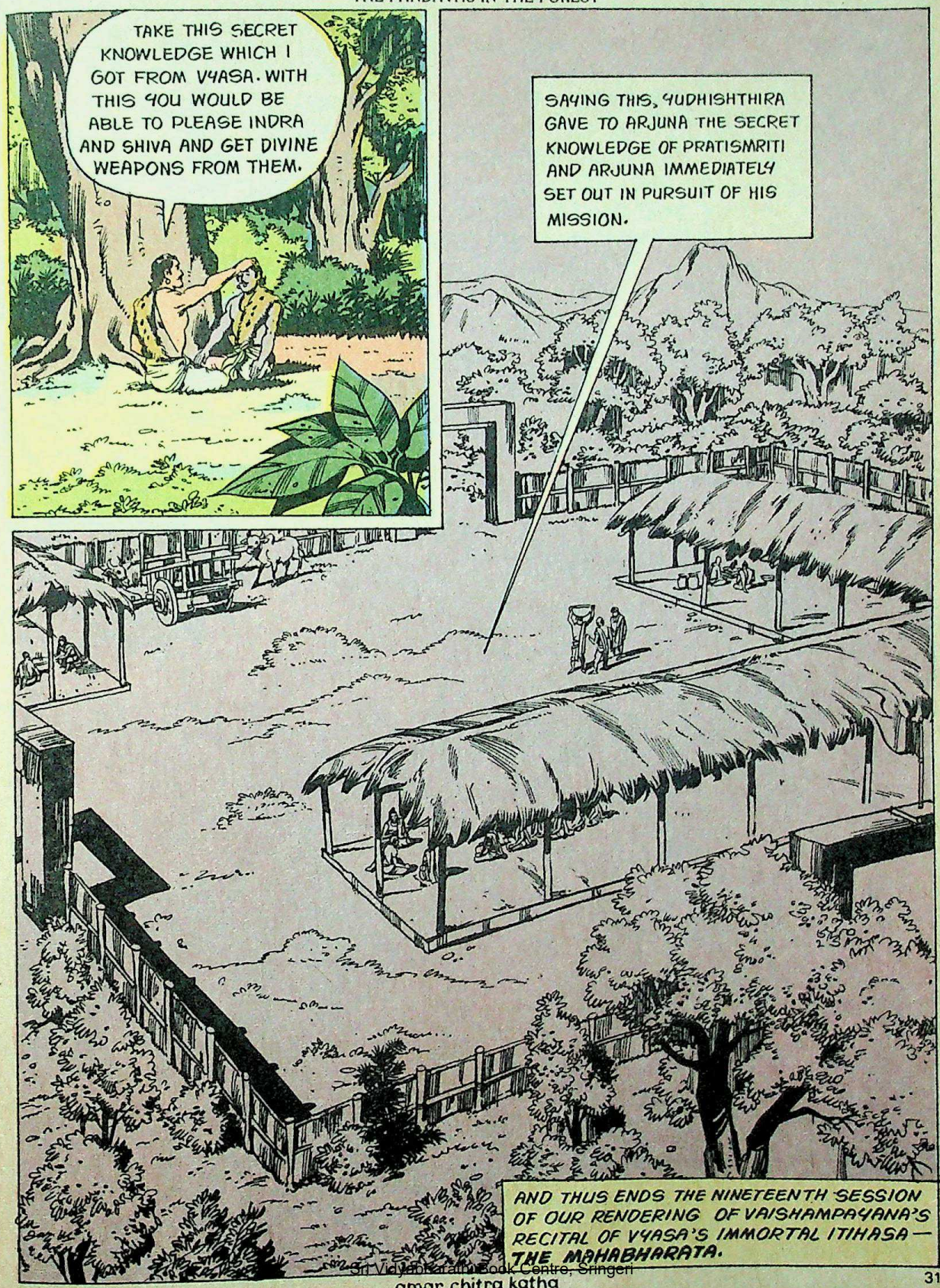

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VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST POETIC WORK WRITTEN IN SANSKRIT; IT IS, THEREFORE, REFERRED TO AS THE ADIKAVYA. IT IS SAID THAT BRAHMA ASSURED VALMIKI THAT "AS LONG AS THE MOUNTAINS STAND AND THE RIVERS FLOW, SO LONG SHALL THE RAMAYANA BE READ BY MEN."

THE IMMORTAL EPIC OF VALMIKI NOW IN THE AMAR CHITRA KATHA SERIES

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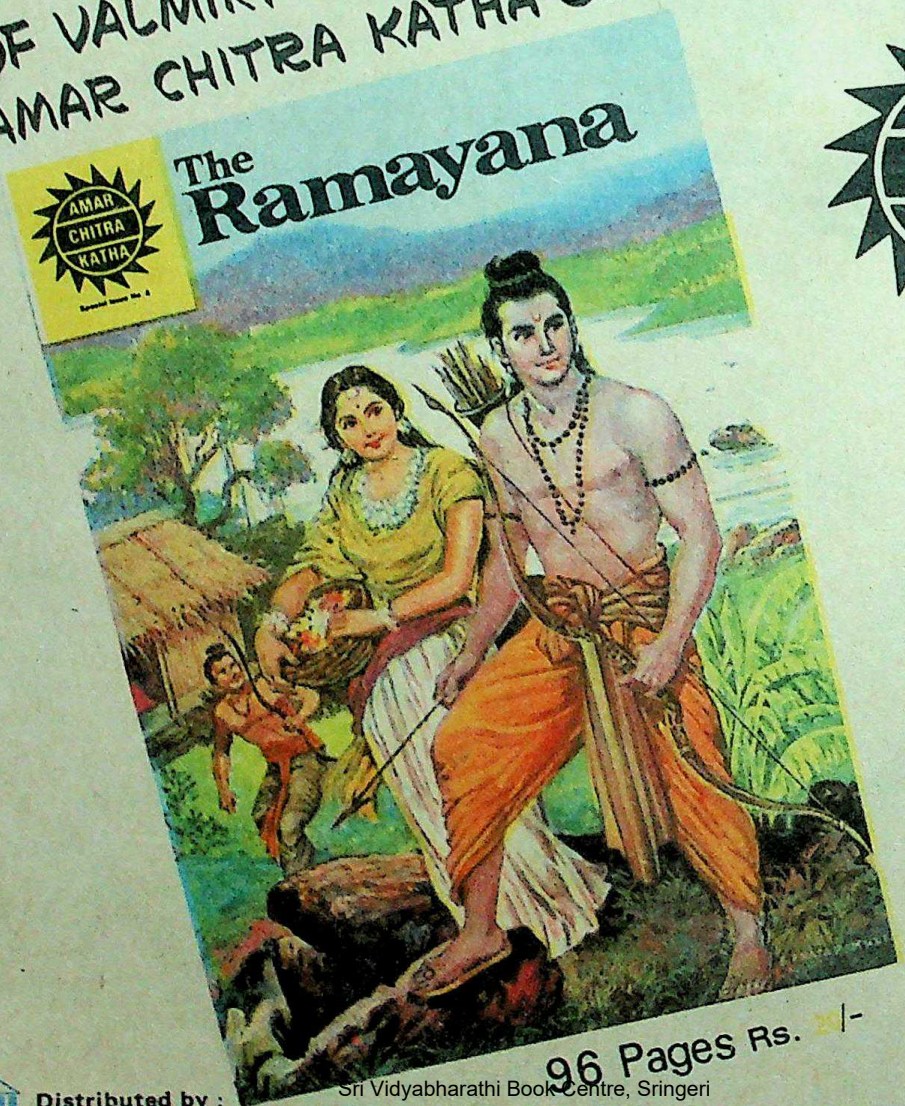

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Mahabharata-20

ARJUNA'S QUEST FOR WEAPONS

BIDDEN BY YUDHISHTHIRA, ARJUNA PREPARED TO LEAVE ON HIS QUEST OF ACQUIRING CELESTIAL WEAPONS WITH THE HELP OF THE SECRET KNOWLEDGE OF PRATISMRITI. HE BURNED WITHIN WITH THE DESIRE TO OBTAIN THE WEAPONS FROM INDRA AND SLAY THE SONS OF DHRITARASHTRA.

"HE EQUIPPED HIMSELF WITH THE GANDEEVA *, TWO INEXHAUSTIBLE QUIVERS, ARMOURS, FINGERGUARDS AND A LEATHER ARM-BAND.

"HE THEN OFFERED OBLATION TO THE FIRE GOD AND GOLD COINS TO THE BRAHMANAS. THE LATTER BLESSED HIM, SAYING:

PROCEED ON YOUR MISSION. VICTORY WILL BE YOURS.

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* NAME OF ARJUNA'S BOW.

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"SEEING ARJUNA, IN HIS WAR-LIKE ATTIRE, TAKING LEAVE OF OTHERS, DRAUPADI SAID:

O MIGHTY DHANANJAYA!* MAY THE WISHES OF YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR OWN AMBITIONS BE FULFILLED!

AFTER YOU GO IN QUEST OF THE WEAPONS, YOUR BROTHERS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REMEMBER YOUR VALOUR AGAIN AND AGAIN. WE WILL FIND SOLACE NEITHER IN INDULGENCE NOR IN WEALTH.

I PRAY TO VASU, RUDRA, ADITYA, THE MARUTS AND ALL OTHER GODS — MAY THEY LOOK AFTER YOUR WELL-BEING.

AFTER DRAUPADI BECAME SILENT, ARJUNA CIRCUMAMBULATED HIS BROTHERS AND DEPARTED ON THE JOURNEY.

* CONQUEROR OF WEALTH (ARJUNA).

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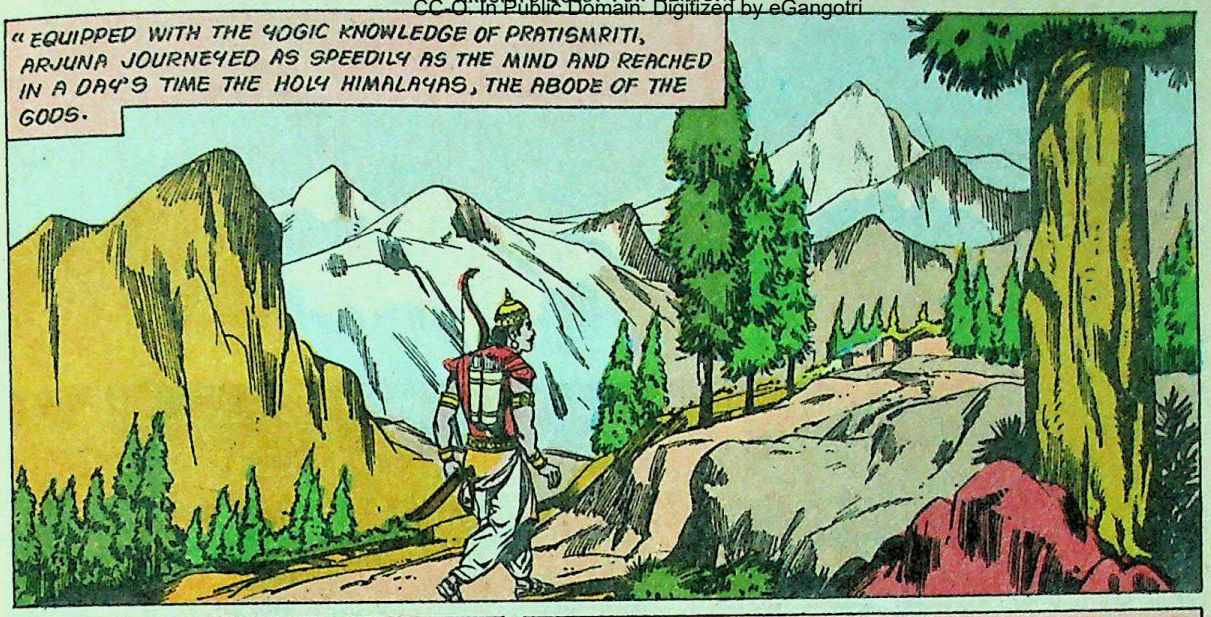

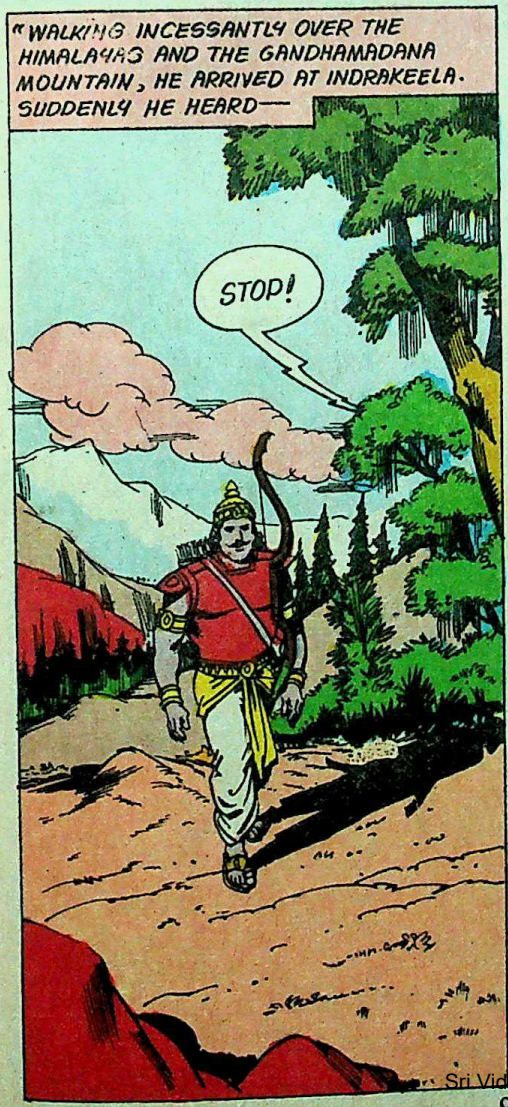

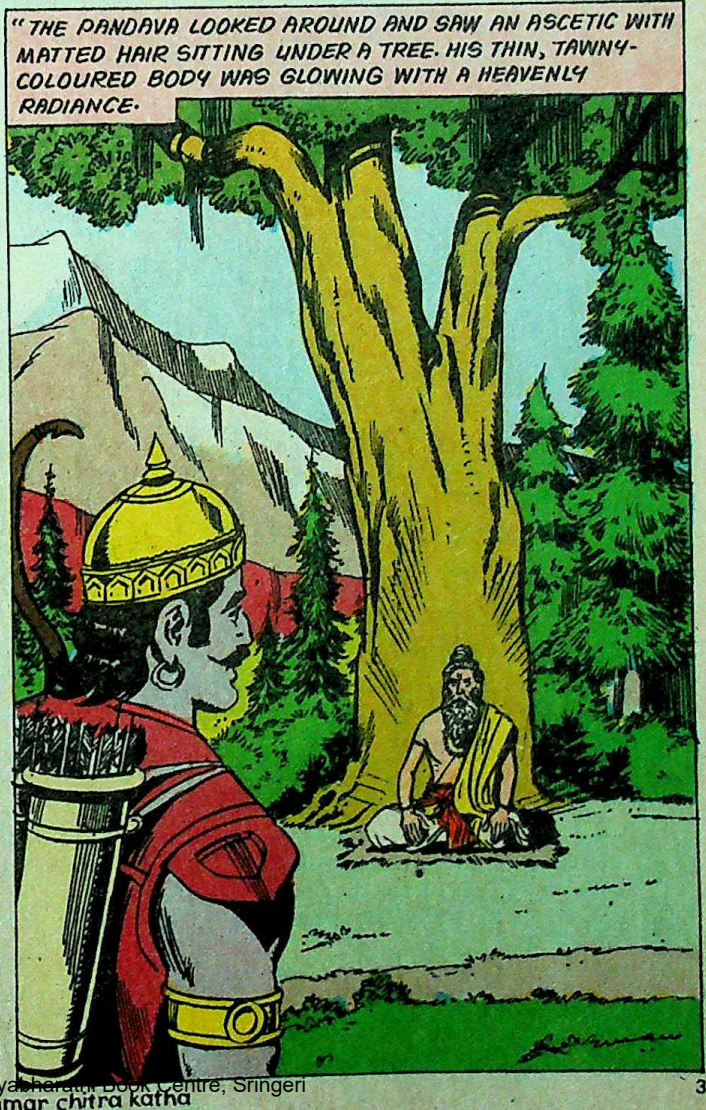

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"THE GREAT ASCETIC ASKED ARJUNA:

WHO ARE YOU? WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE FOLLOWING THE DHARMA OF A KSHATRIYA EQUIPPED WITH BOW AND ARROWS, SWORD AND ARMOUR?

THIS PLACE IS THE HERMITAGE OF ASCETIC BRAHMANAS WHO ARE PEACE-LOVING AND DEVOID OF ALL PASSIONS.

THIS PLACE HAS NEVER BEEN A SCENE OF BATTLE AND SO THERE IS NO NEED FOR ANYONE TO CARRY WEAPONS HERE.

YOU HAVE ATTAINED YOUR FINAL GOAL BY COMING HERE. SO THROW AWAY YOUR ARMS.

THUS THE GREAT SAGE, WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE, REPEATEDLY ASKED ARJUNA TO DISCARD HIS WEAPONS. BUT ARJUNA WAS NOT PERSUADED TO DO SO.

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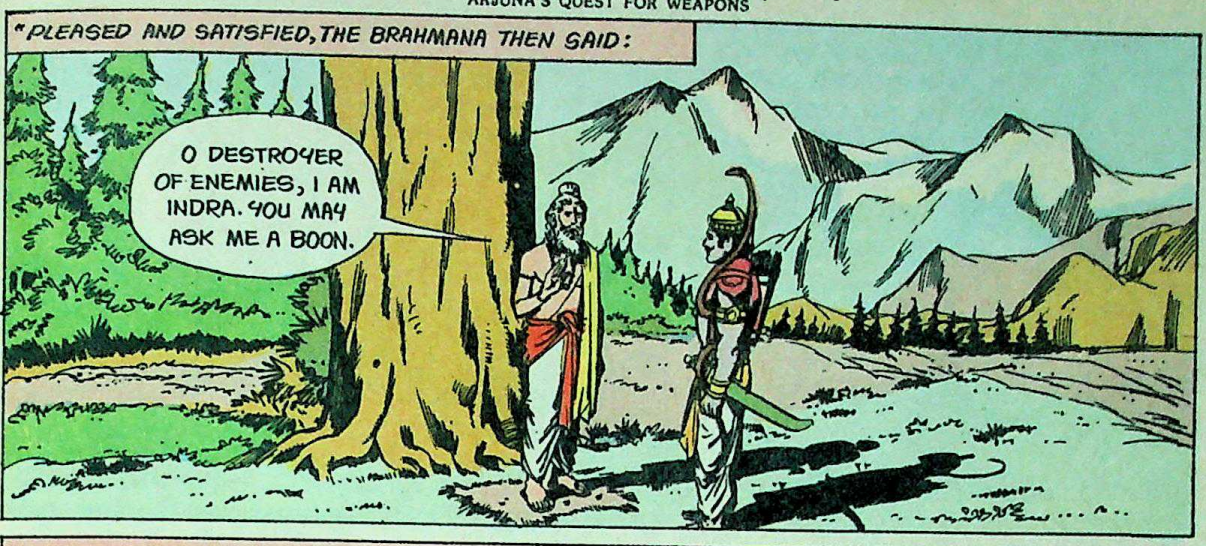

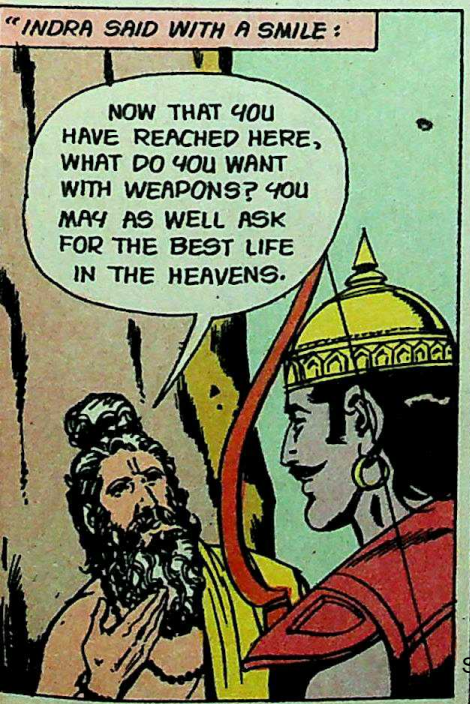

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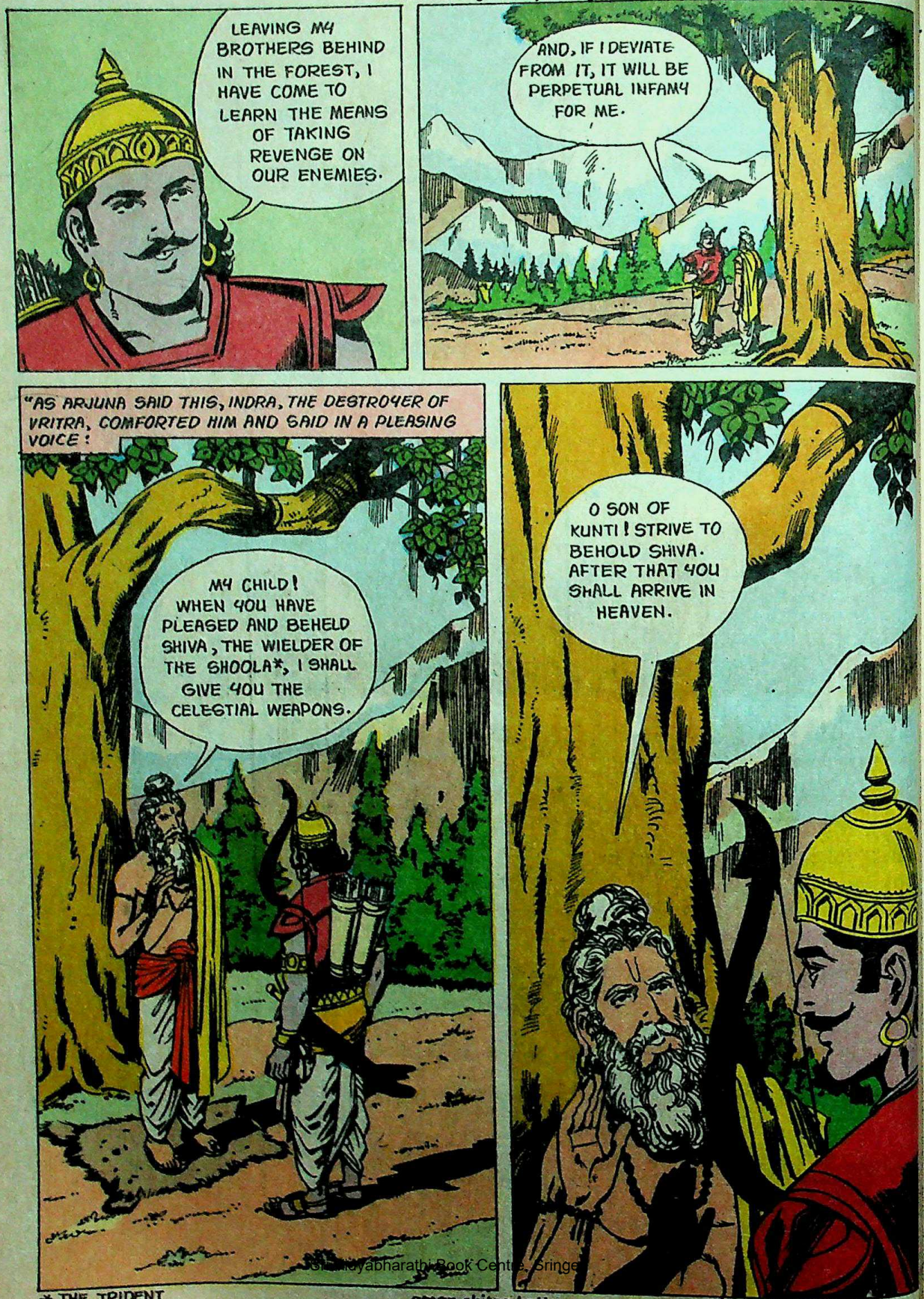

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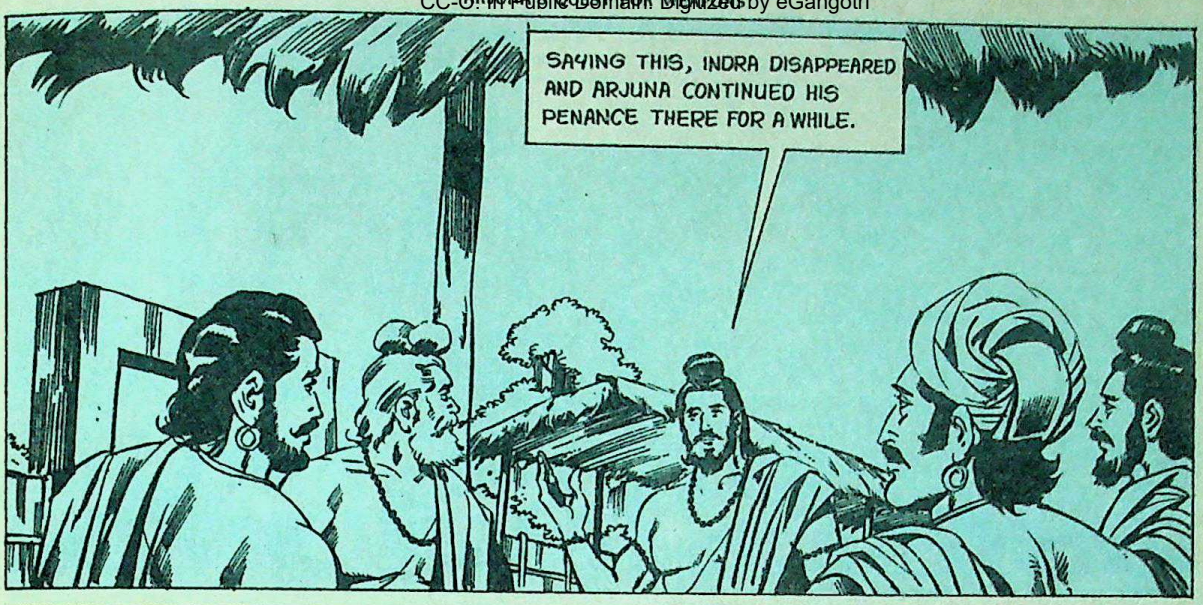

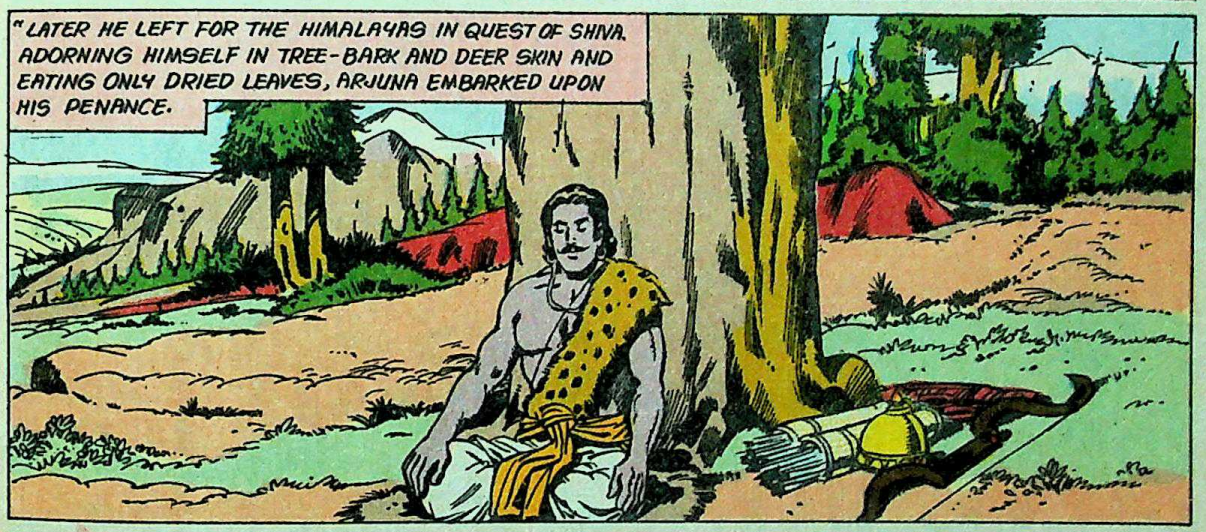

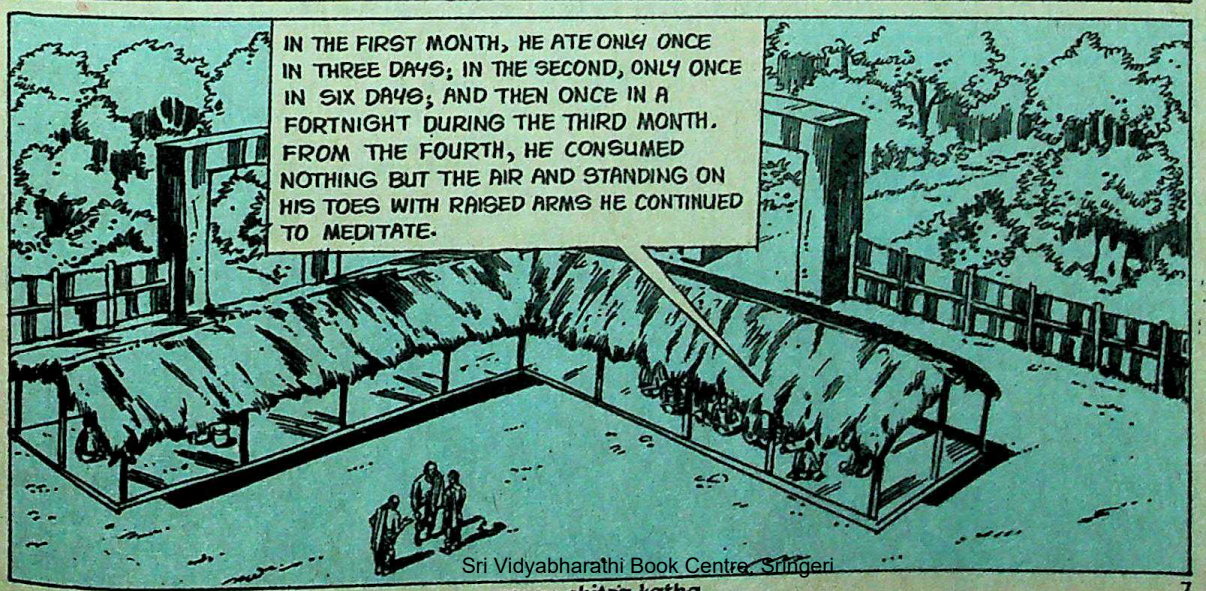

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"ALL THE SAGES WHO WITNESSED HIS GREAT TAPAS* APPROACHED SHIVA TO TELL THE GOD ABOUT IT. BOWING TO HIM THEY SAID:

O LORD OF LORDS! THE SPLENDID ARJUNA HAS BEEN PERFORMING TAPAS IN THE HIMALAYAS AND THE ENTIRE REGION HAS BECOME CLOUDY AS A RESULT OF HIS INTENSE MEDITATIONS.

WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HE IS AFTER. BUT WE HAVE BEEN MUCH PERTURBED.

PRAY, STOP HIM!

"ON HEARING THESE WORDS OF THE PURE-HEARTED SAGES, THE LORD OF ALL CREATION SAID:

YOU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT ARJUNA. HE DOES NOT DESIRE THE HEAVEN, WEALTH OR ETERNAL LIFE.

I KNOW WHAT HE HAS COME FOR. TODAY I WILL FULFIL HIS DESIRE.

* SEVERE PENANCE.

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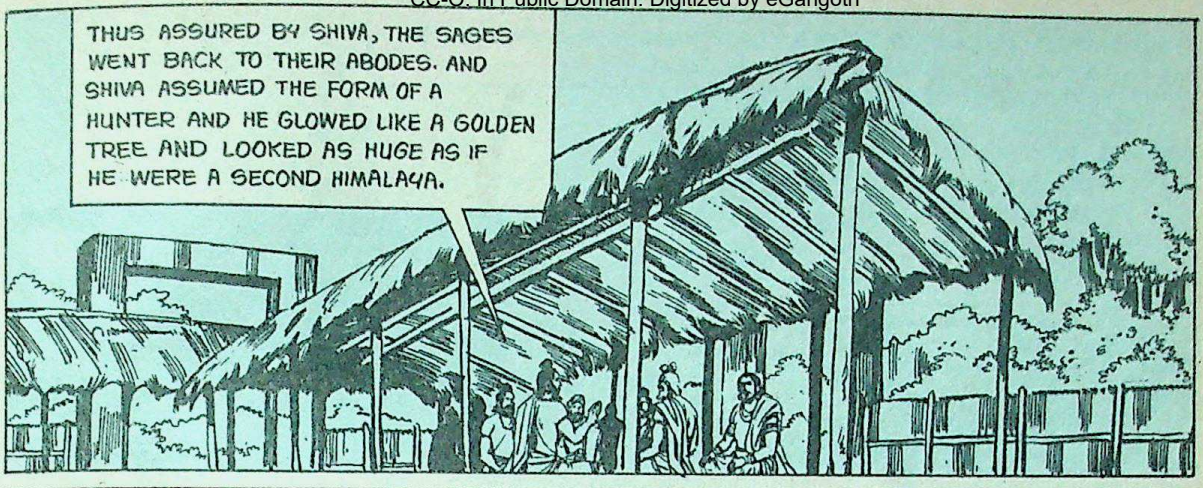

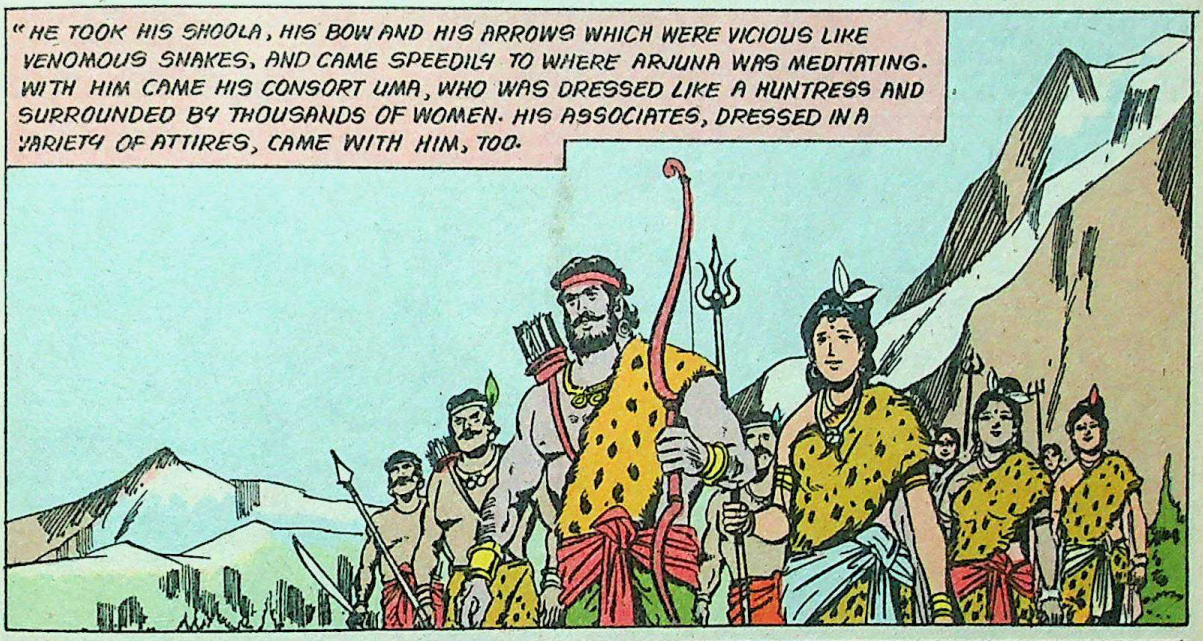

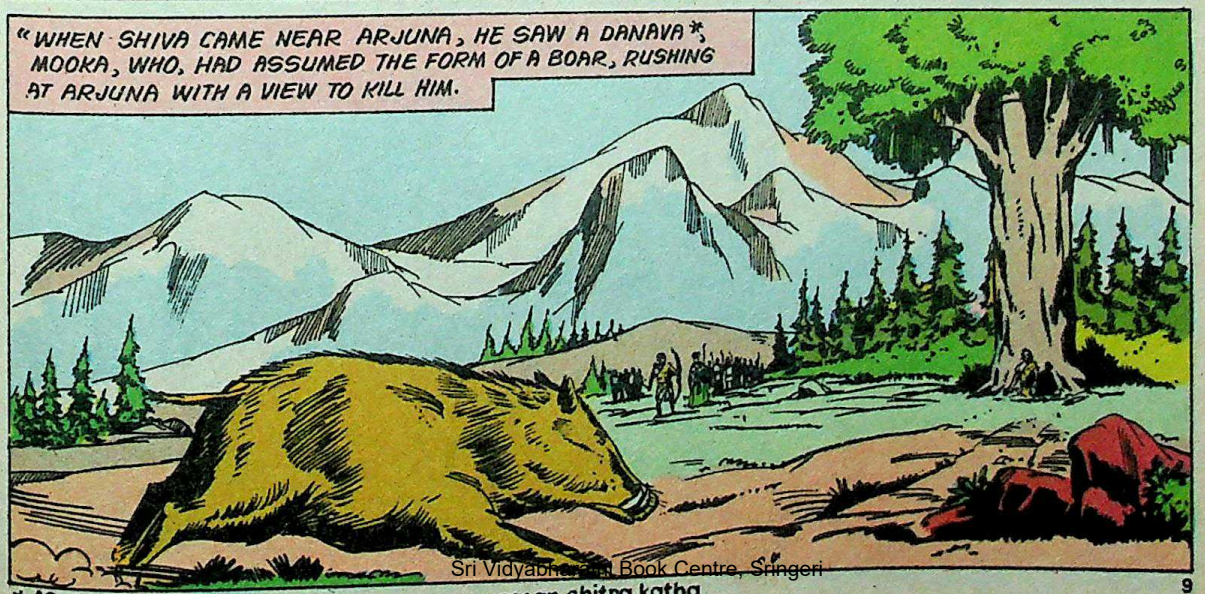

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"AND SEEING THIS ARJUNA PICKED UP HIS GANDEEVA, MOUNTED ON IT HIS SNAKE-LIKE ARROW AND SAID TO THE BOAR:

O WICKED ONE! I HAVE CAUSED YOU NO HARM AND YET YOU WANT TO KILL ME.

FOR THIS I AM GOING TO SEND YOU TO THE ABODE OF DEATH.

"BUT JUST THEN SHIVA, IN THE GUISE OF A HUNTER STOPPED ARJUNA FROM SHOOTING AND SAID:

O ASCETIC! I'M THE ONE WHO FIRST SPOTTED THIS BOAR, LUMINOUS LIKE INDRAKEEL.

"WITHOUT PAYING ANY HEED TO HIM, ARJUNA SENT AN ARROW AT THE BOAR.

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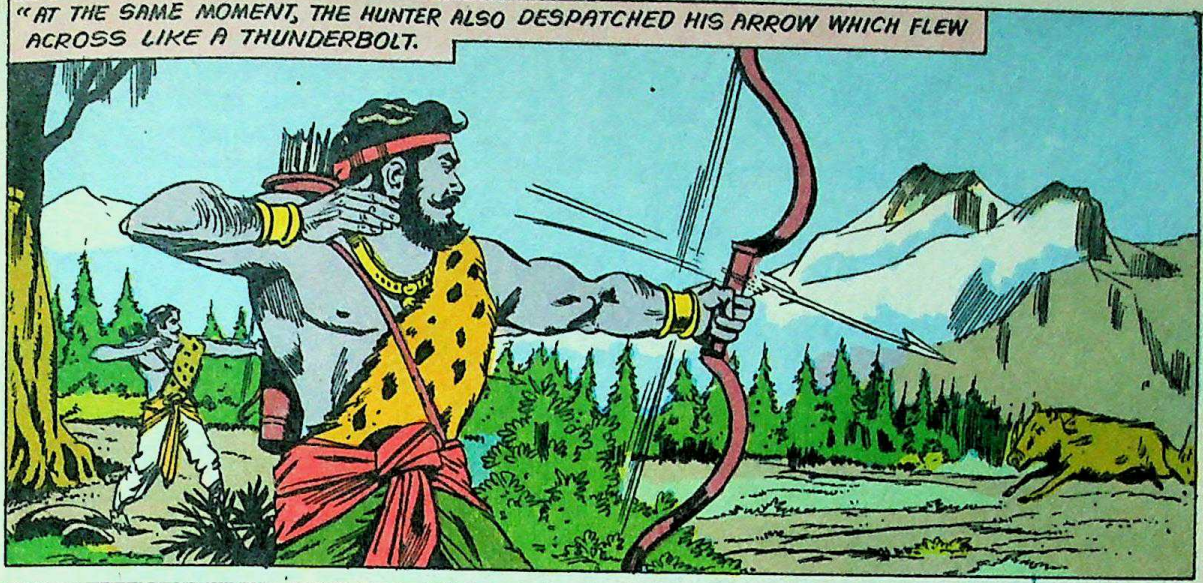

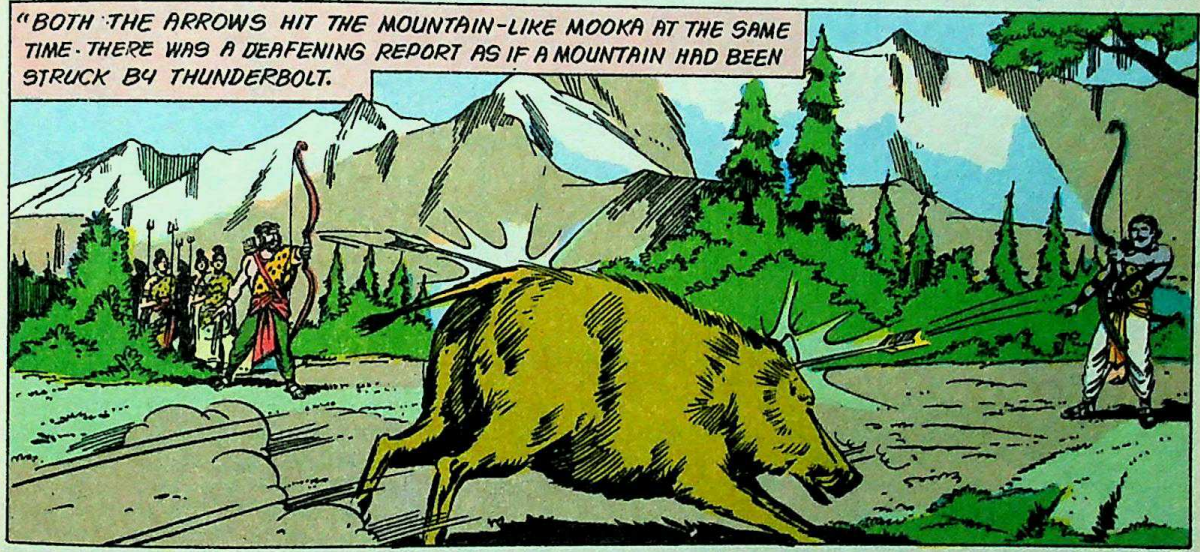

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"THEN ARJUNA, LOOKING AT THE HUNTER, SAID WITH A SMILE:

WHO ARE YOU, ROAMING WITH WOMEN IN THIS DEADLY FOREST? ARE YOU NOT AFRAID?

AND WHY DID YOU SHOOT THE BEAST AFTER I HAD SHOT IT?

YOU HAVE ACTED AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED RULES OF HUNTING AND YOU DESERVE TO DIE AT MY HANDS.

"HEARING THESE WORDS OF ARJUNA, THE HUNTER LAUGHED AND SAID:

YOU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT ME. WE ARE FOREST DWELLERS AND IT IS NATURAL THAT WE TREAD IN THE FOREST.

BUT YOU ARE YOUNG AND APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP IN LUXURY. WHY ARE YOU LIVING ALONE IN THE FOREST?

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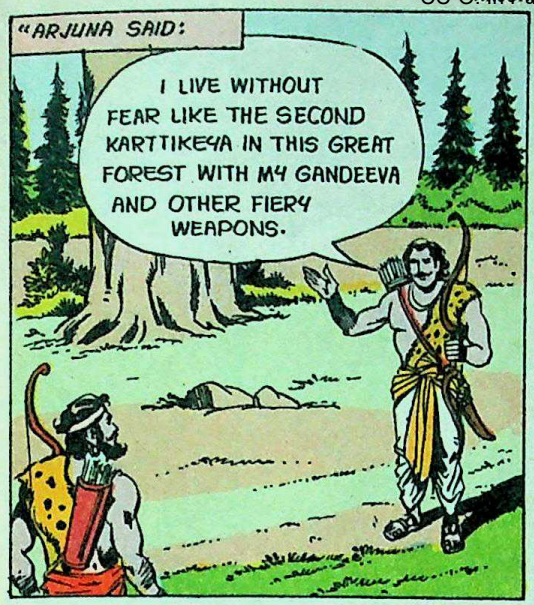

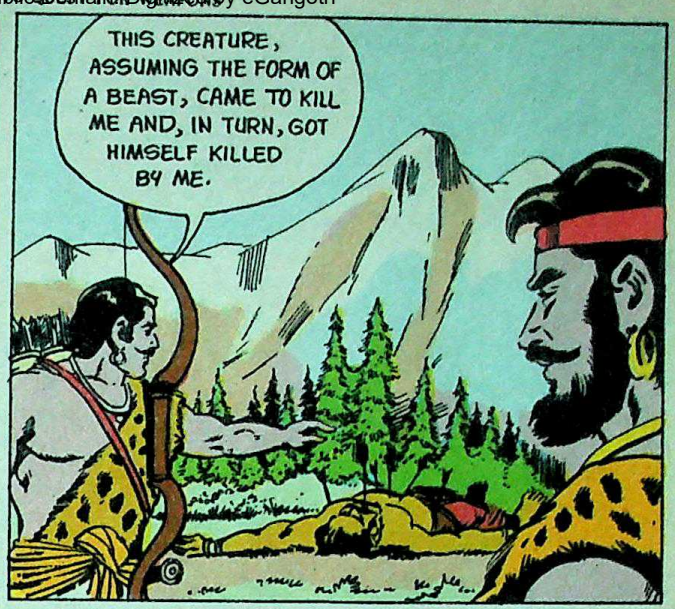

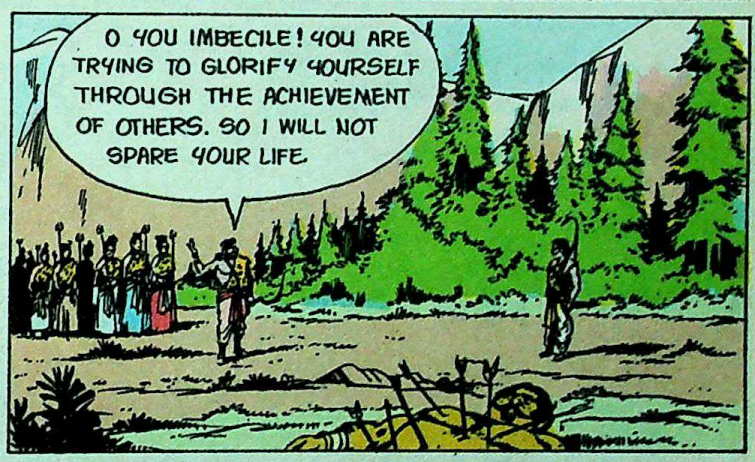

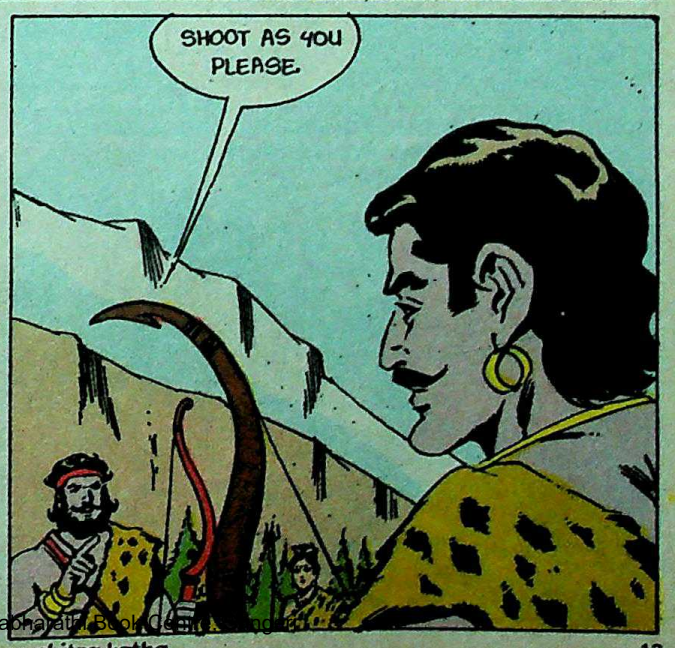

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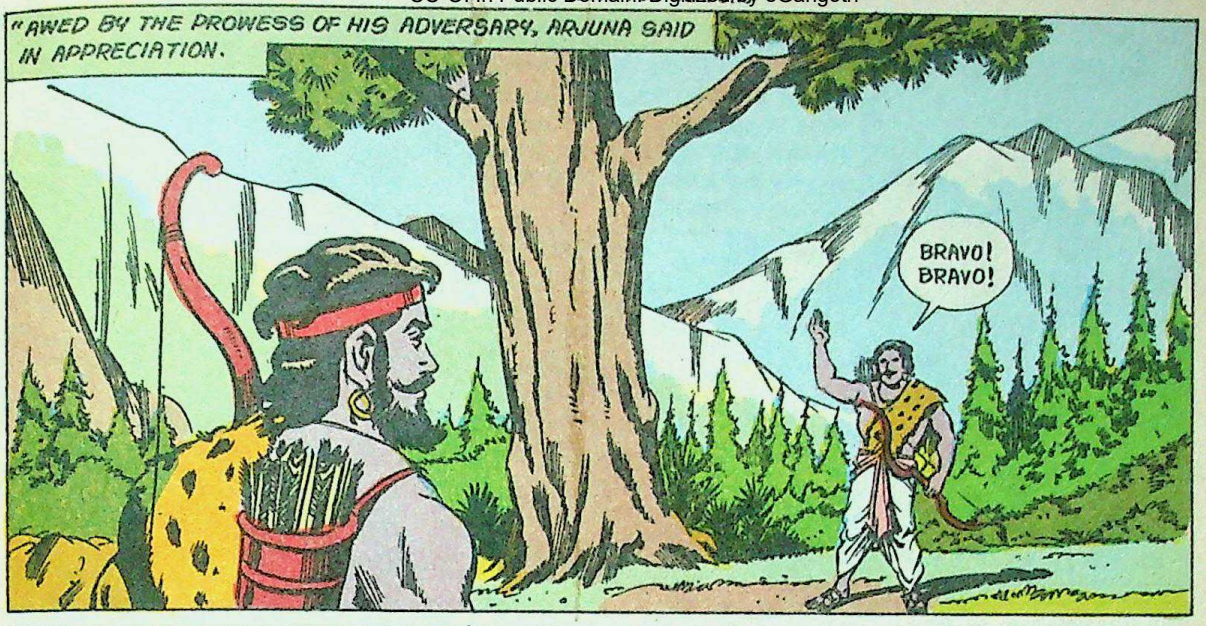

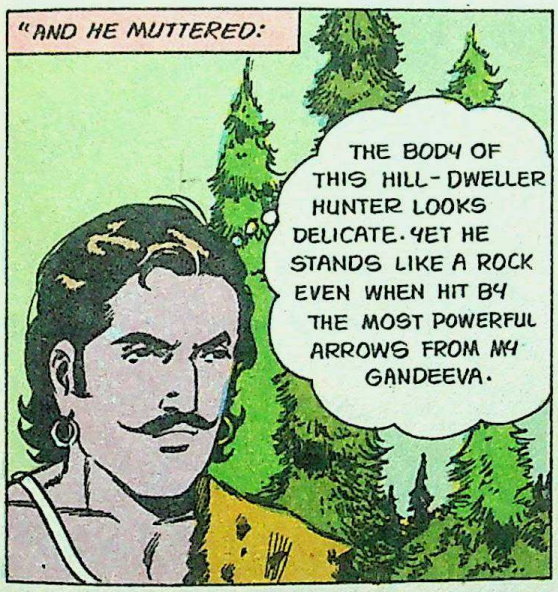

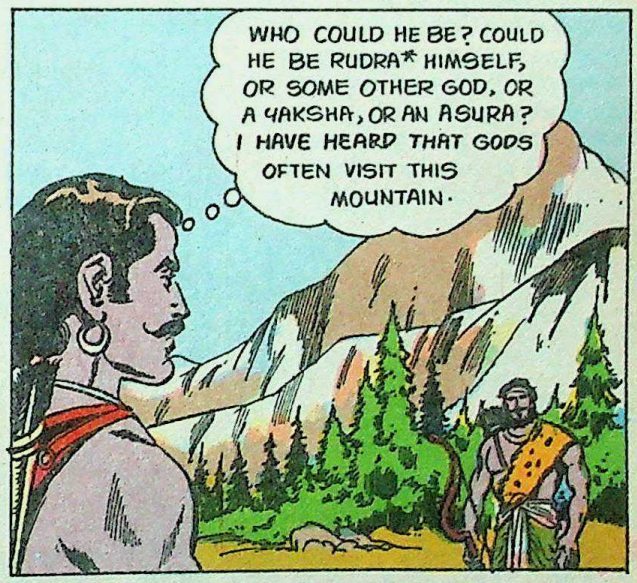

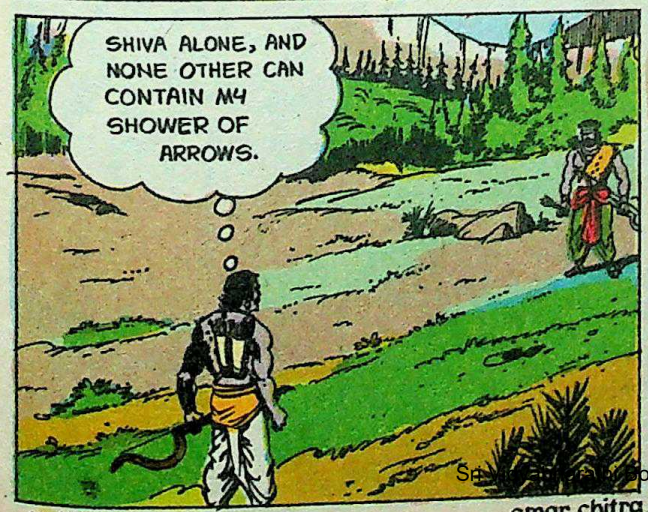

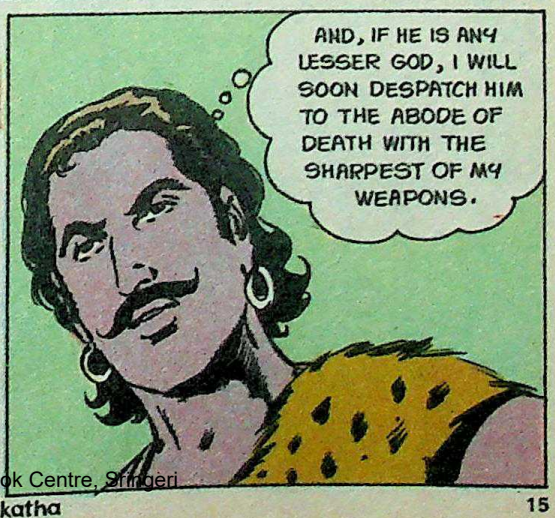

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THINKING THUS, O MONARCH, ARJUNA ASSAILED THE HUNTER WITH A SHOWER OF ARROWS WHICH PIERCED THE LATTER LIKE THE RAYS OF THE SUN. BUT THE WIELDER OF SHOOLA ABSORBED ALL OF THEM IN THE MANNER A MOUNTAIN ABSORBS SHOWERS OF ROCKS.

"SOON ARJUNA NEARLY EXHAUSTED HIS ARROWS AND BECAME GREATLY ALARMED. HE REMEMBERED THAT HIS TWO QUIVERS PRESENTED BY AGNI AT THE TIME OF THE KHANDAVA-DAHANA WERE INEXHAUSTIBLE.

"HE AGAIN WONDERED:

WHO COULD BE THIS HUNTER WHO IS NOT AFFECTED BY MY ARROWS?

LET ME DESTROY HIM WITH THE TIP OF MY BOW.

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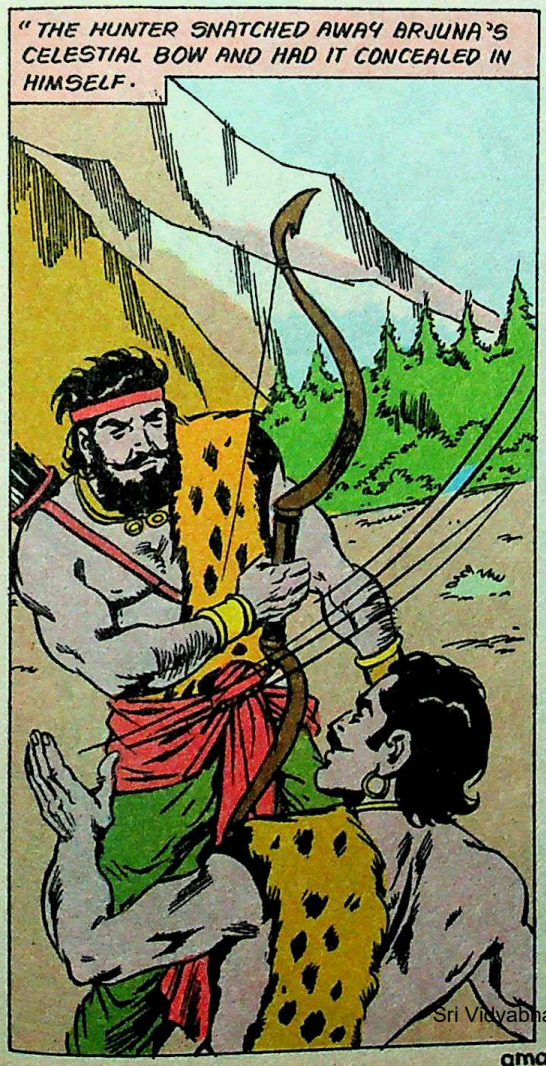

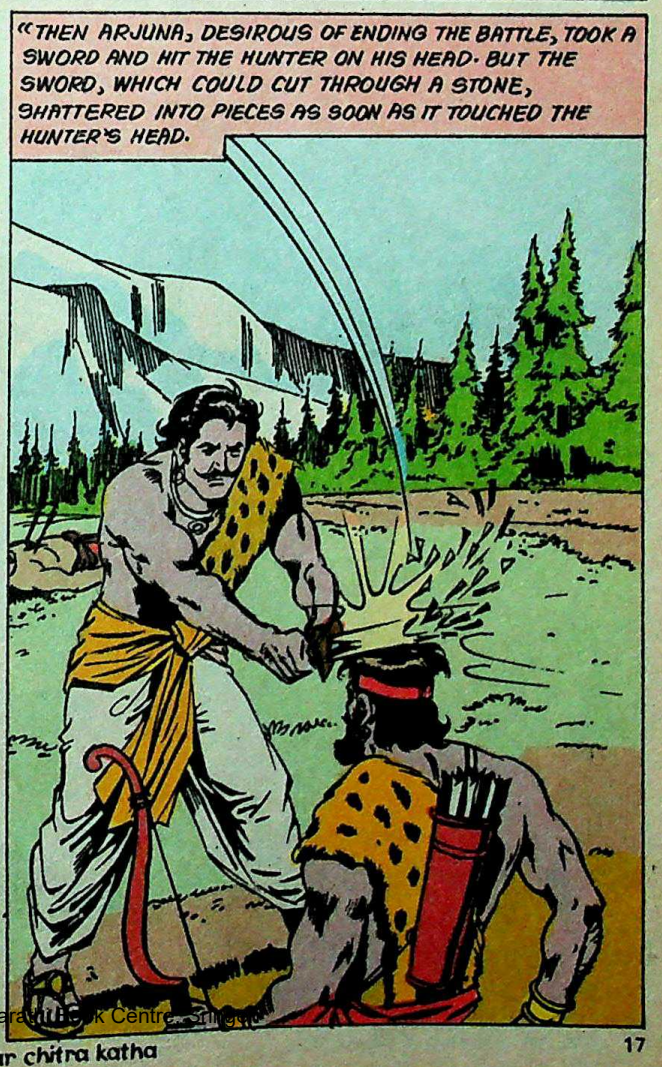

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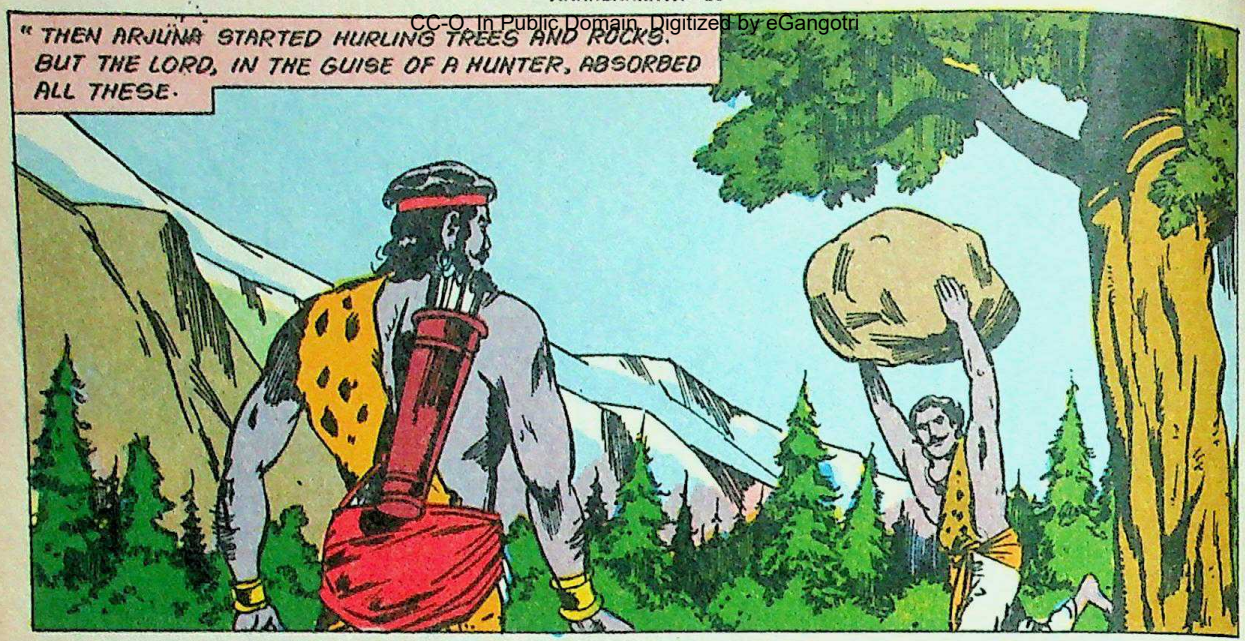

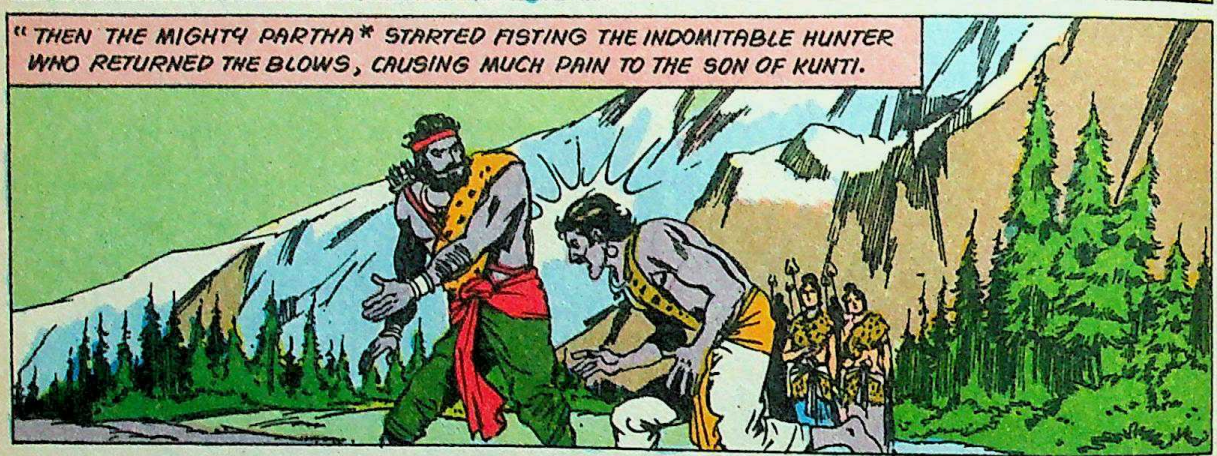

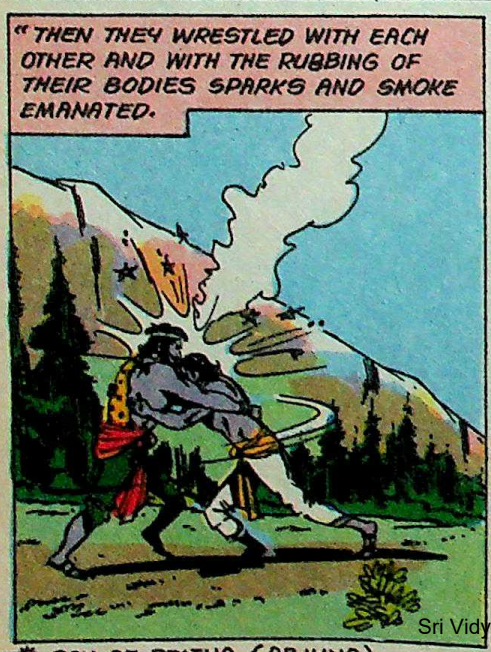

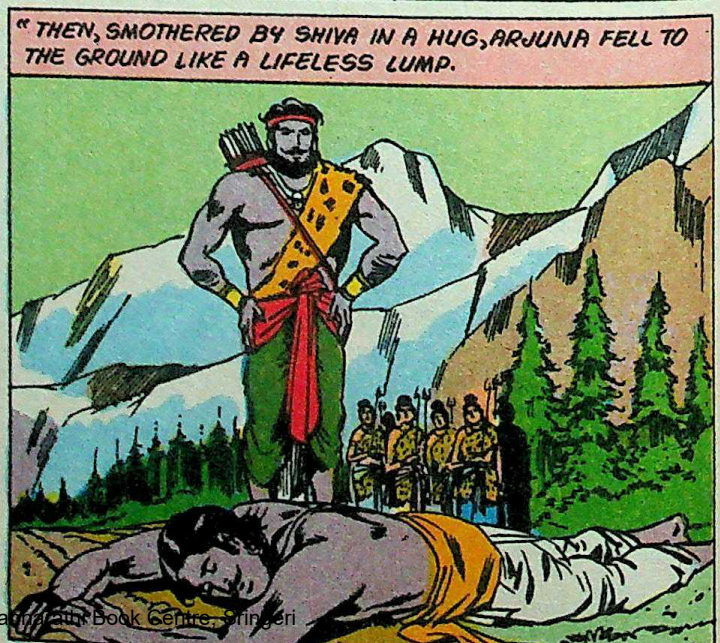

* SON OF PRITHA (ARJUNA)

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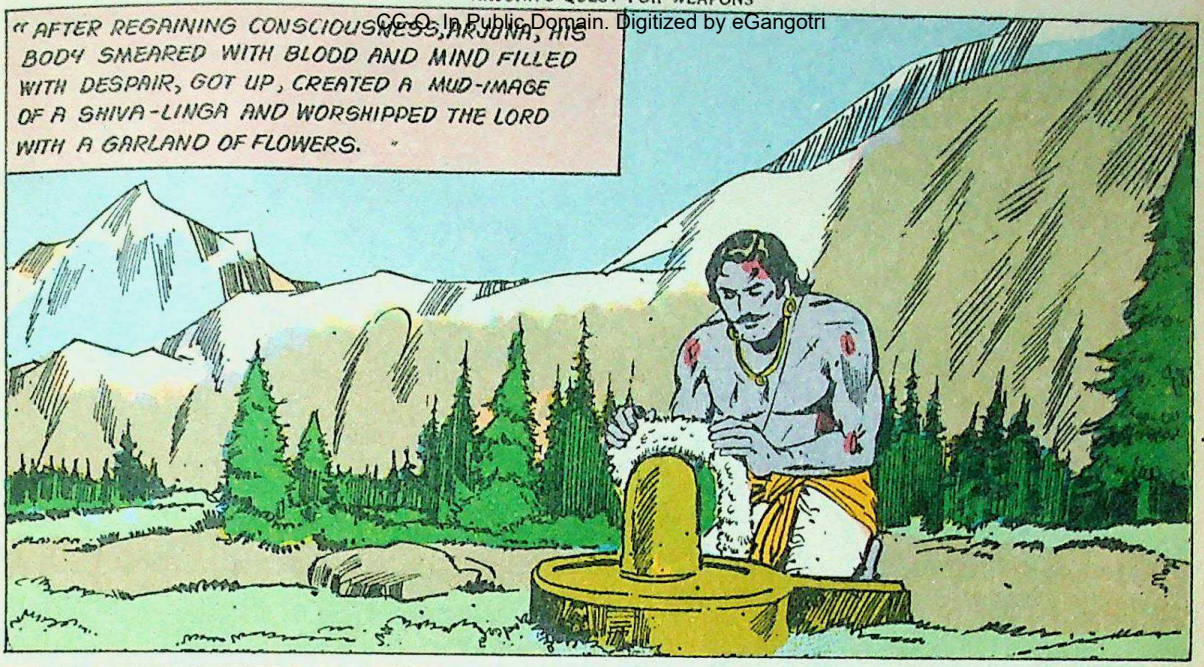

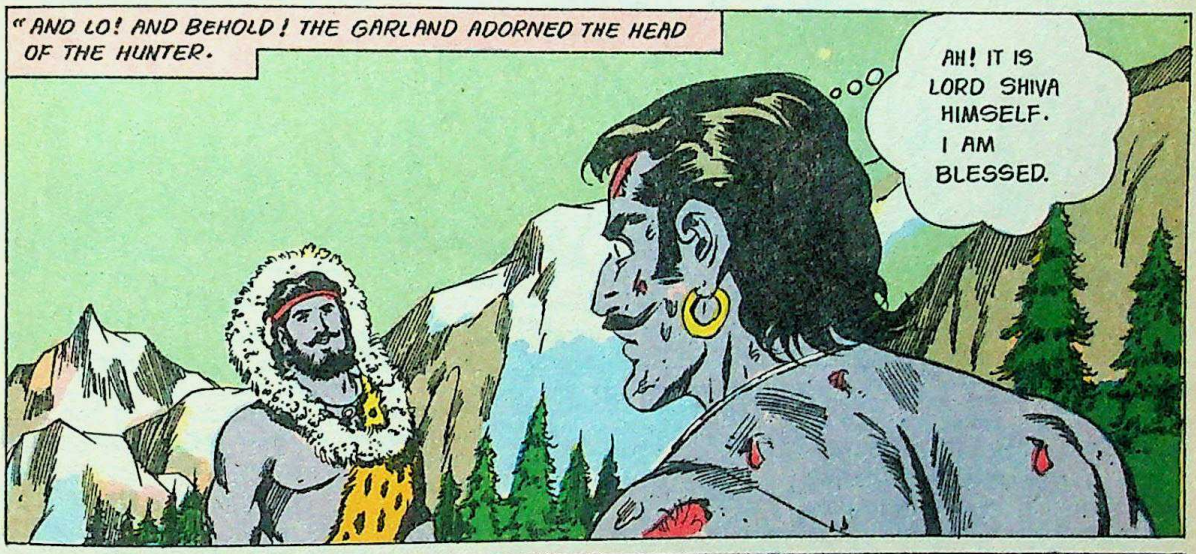

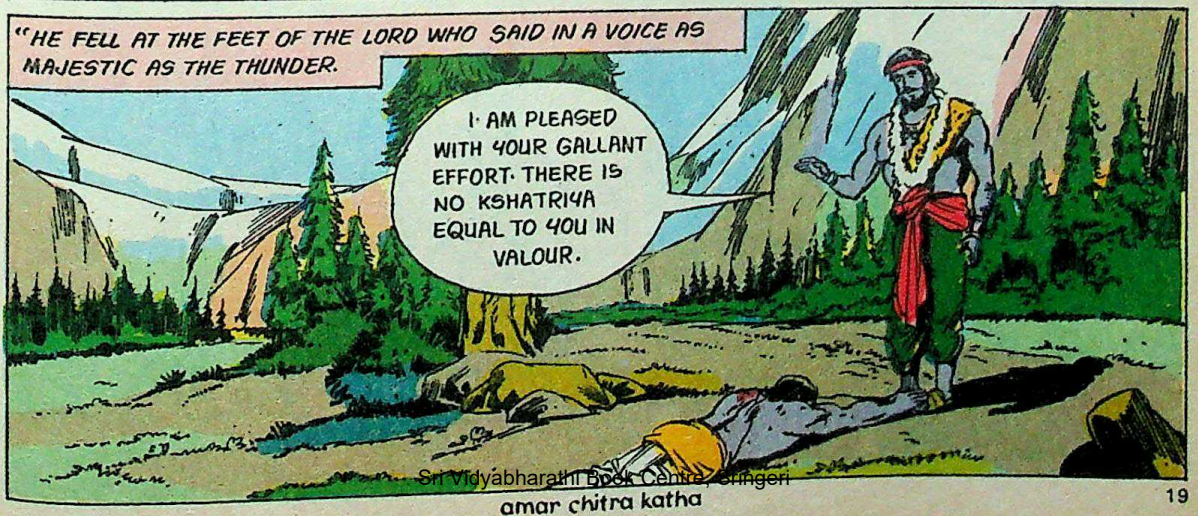

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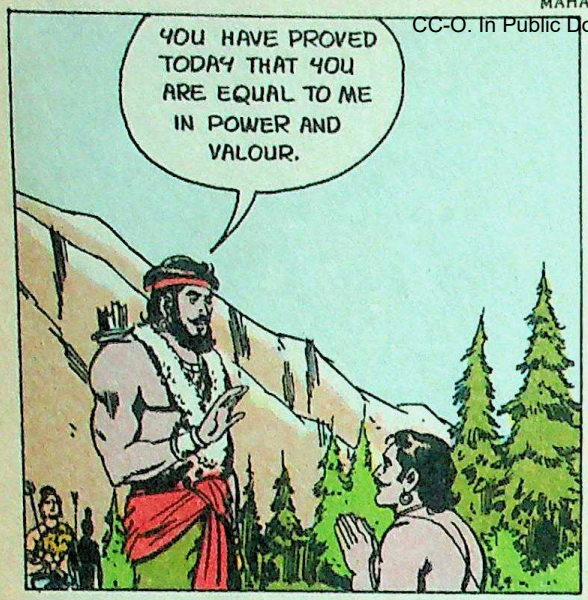

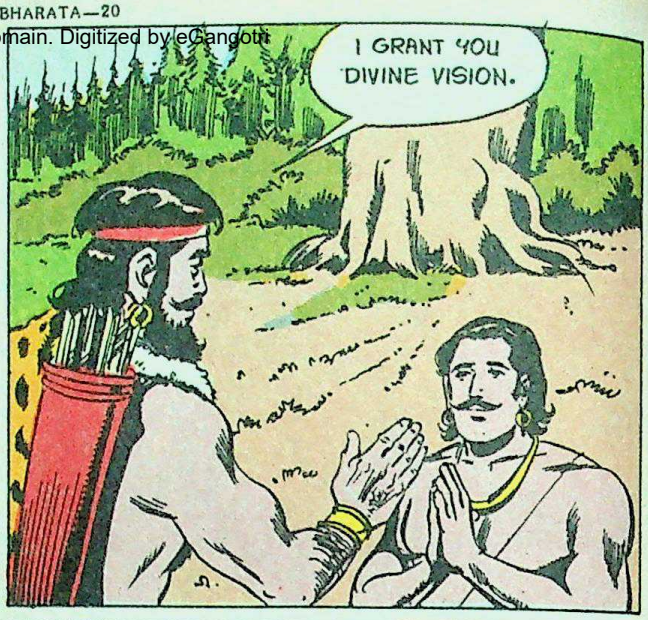

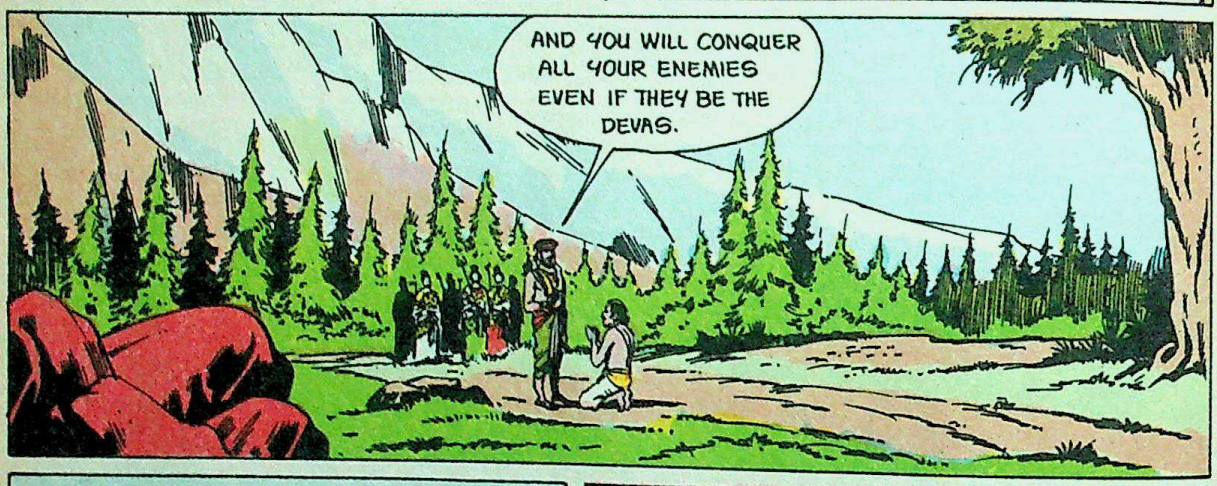

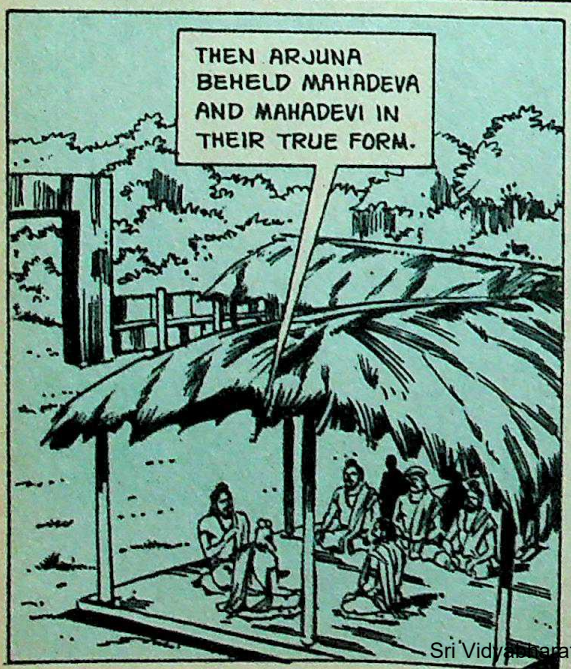

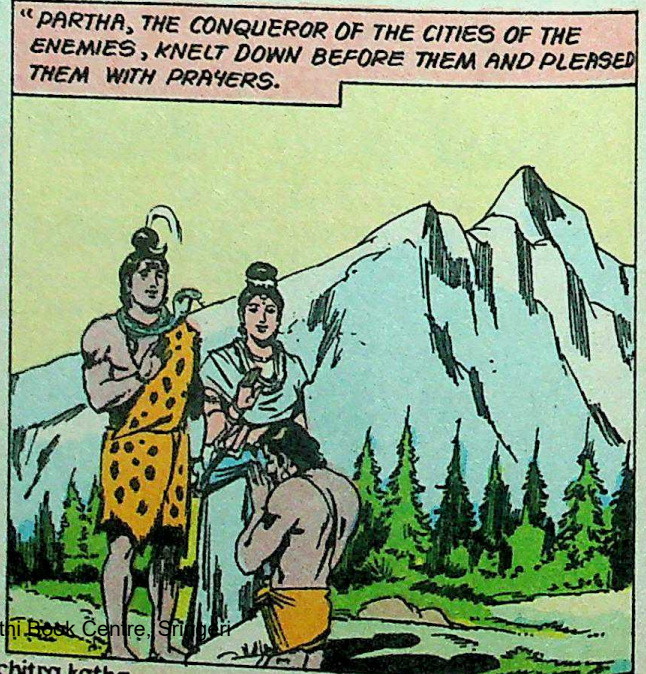

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"AND HE SAID:

O GOD OF GODS, I HAVE COME TO THIS MOUNTAIN, INHABITED BY ASCETICS, WITH THE DESIRE TO BEHOLD YOU.

BUT, O SHANKARA, I FOUGHT WITH YOU OUT OF IGNORANCE. PLEASE FORGIVE ME MY AUDACITY.

"THEN THE OMNIPOTENT GOD TOOK ARJUNA'S HAND AND SAID WITH A SMILE:

YOU ARE ALREADY FORGIVEN.

"THEN THEY EMBRACED EACH OTHER AND THE LORD, WHO HAS THE BULL FOR AN EMBLEM ON HIS FLAG, COMFORTED PARTHA, SAYING:

IN YOUR PREVIOUS BIRTH YOU WERE NARA, THE UNIVERSAL MAN, AND ALONG WITH NARAYANA* YOU UPHELD THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

* VISHNU

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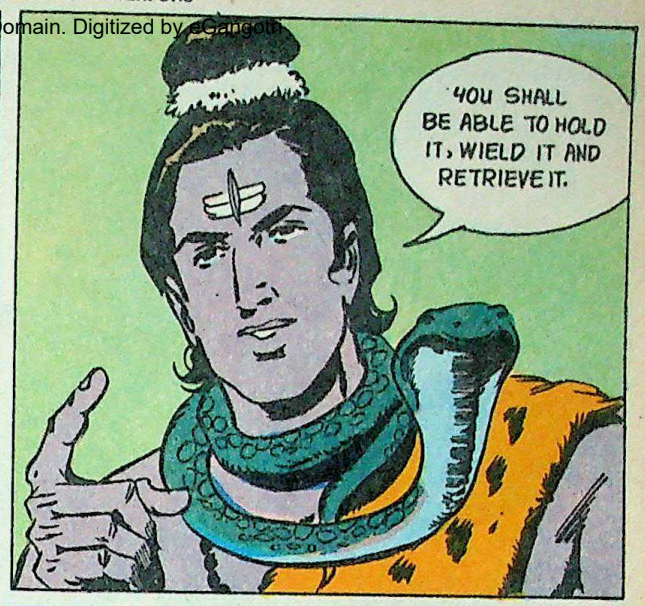

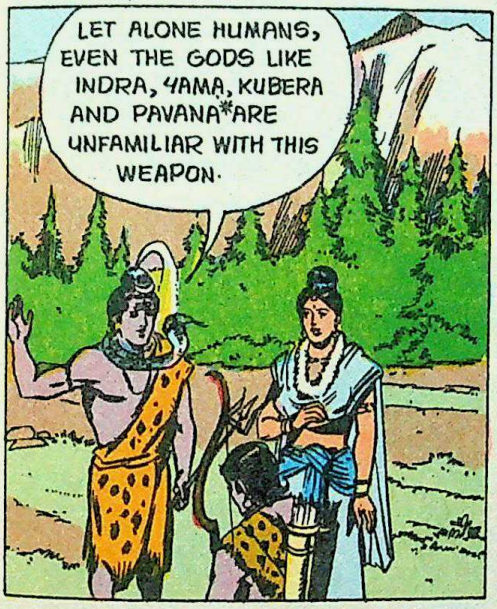

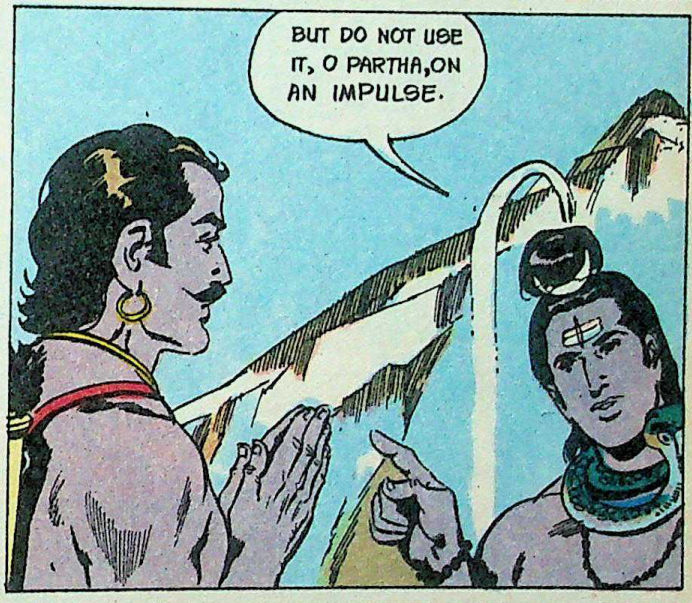

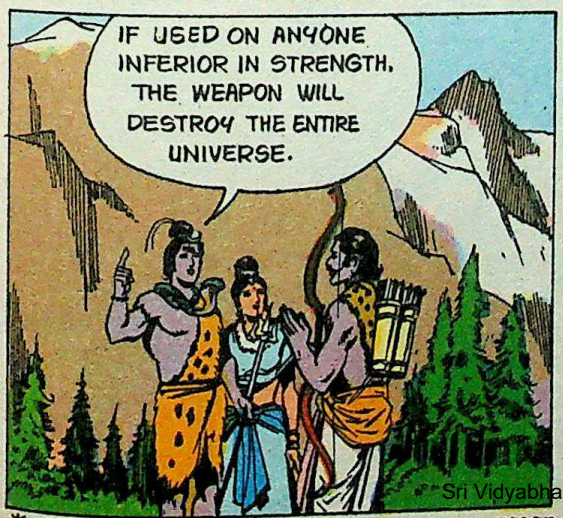

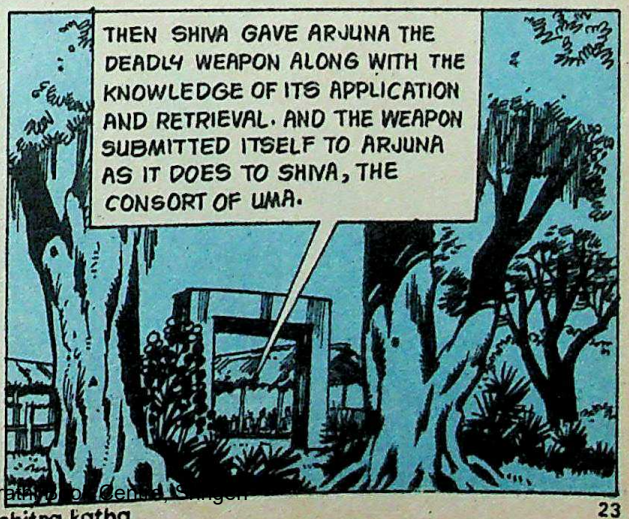

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* GOD OF WIND

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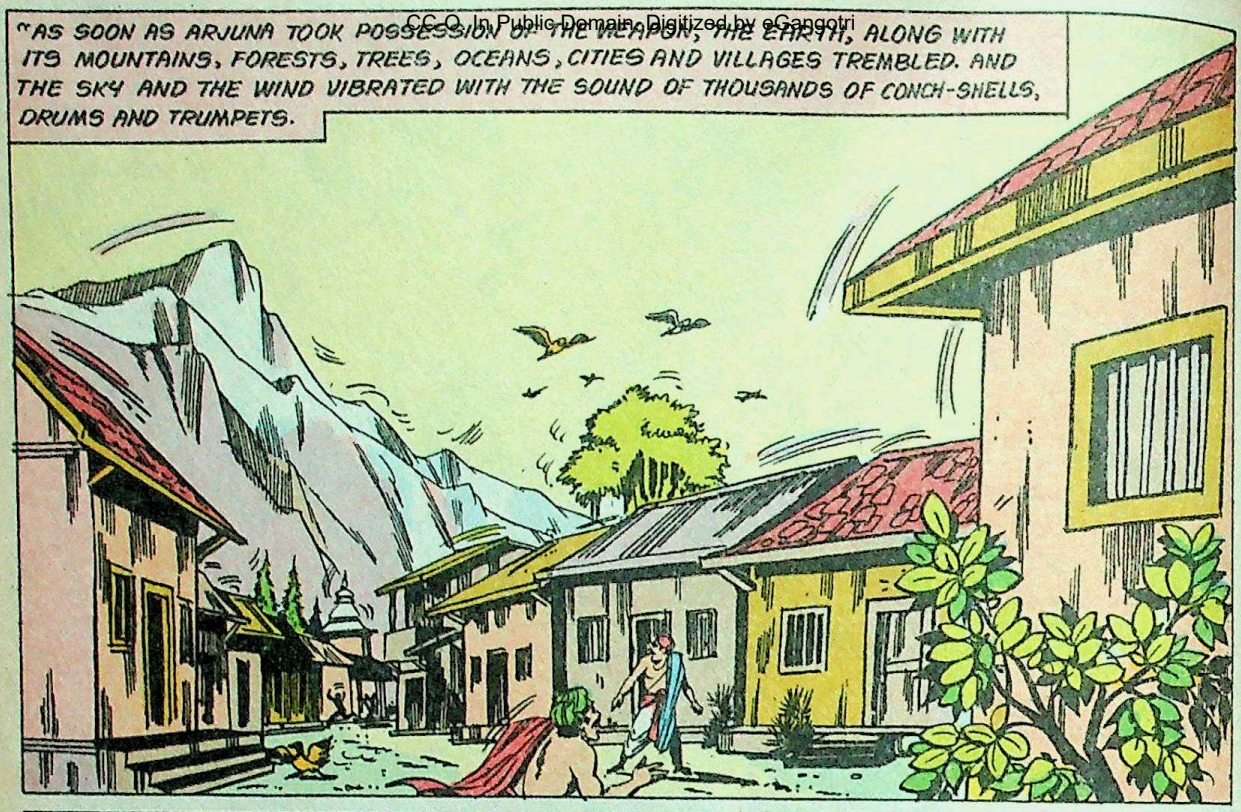

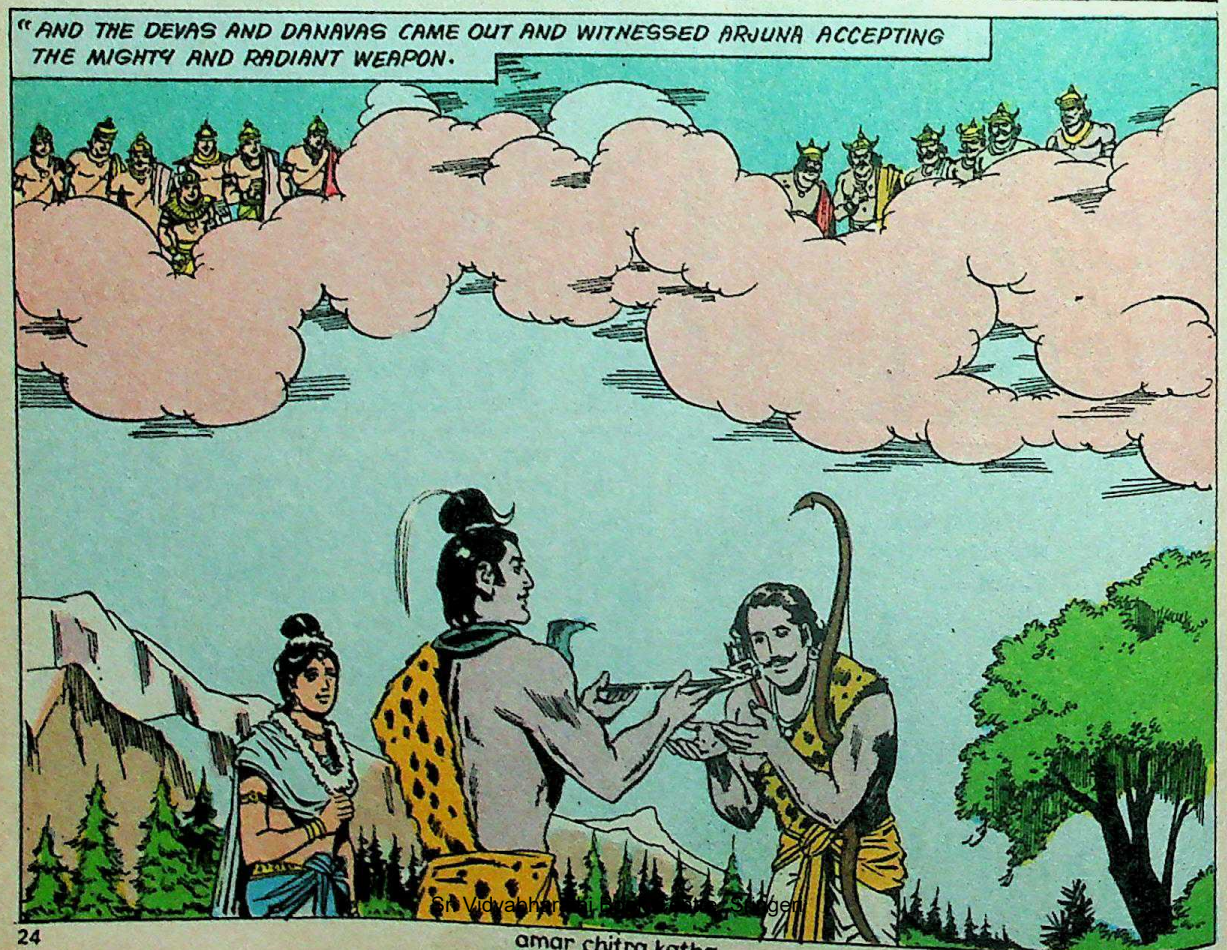

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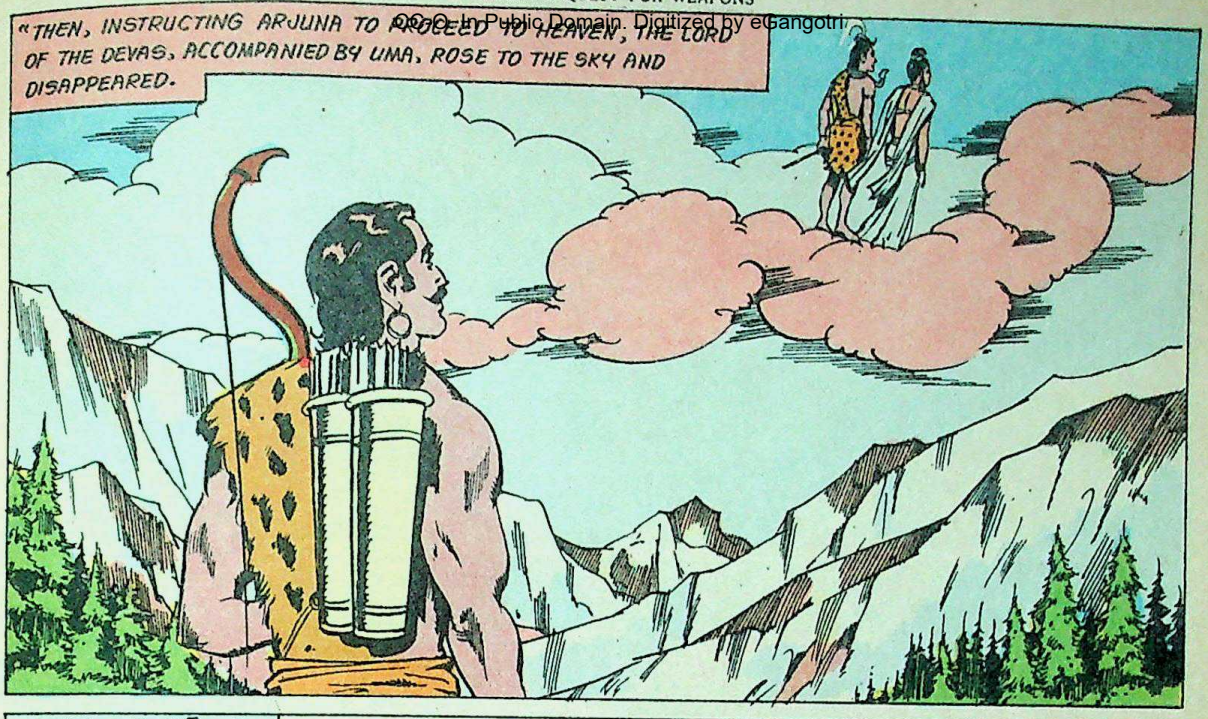

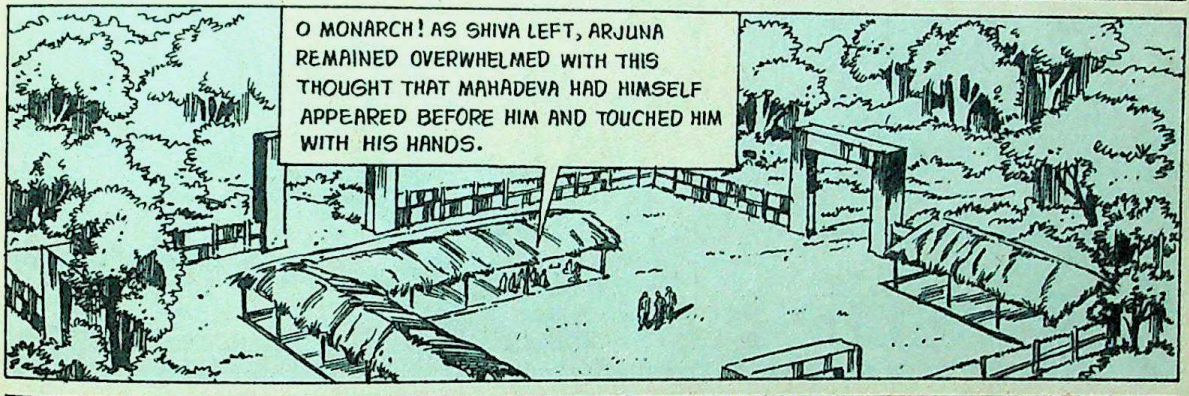

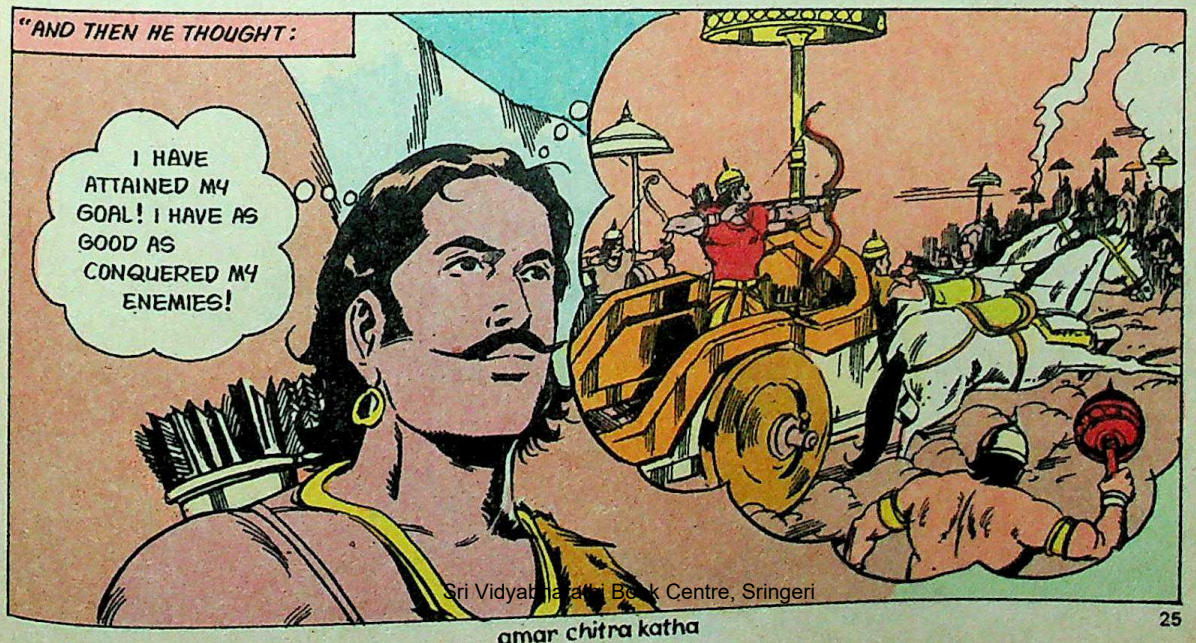

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AS THE ALL-POWERFUL PARTHA PONDERED THUS, VARUNA, THE LORD OF THE WATERS, APPEARED BEFORE HIM MAKING THE PLACE BRIGHT WITH THE GLOW OF HIS GEM-LIKE COMPLEXION.

"ALONG WITH HIM CAME THE AQUATIC ANIMALS, THE SNAKES, THE RULING GODS OF THE RIVERS, THE DAITYAS* AND THE SADHYAS*.

"THEN CAME KUBERA+, ON A RADIANT CHARIOT. HIS COMPLEXION WAS AS GOLDEN AS THE WATERS OF THE JAMBU RIVER. ALL THE YAKSHAS CAME WITH HIM.

* DIFFERENT KINDS OF BEINGS

+ GOD OF WEALTH.

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"IN ANOTHER VIMANA* CAME YAMA, THE GOD OF DEATH, THE DESTROYER OF ALL THE CREATURES. HE, THE SON OF SURYA, CARRIED IN HIS HAND THE DANDA, THE ROD OF DESTINY, AND CAME WITH THE ANCESTRAL SPIRITS OF MEN, IN HUMAN FORMS.

"IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT, CAME INDRA, THE KING OF DEVAS, RIDING ON HIS ELEPHANT AIRAVATA. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY HIS CONSORT, INDRANI**, AND ALL THE DEVAS.

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* AERIAL CHARIOT ** SHACHI

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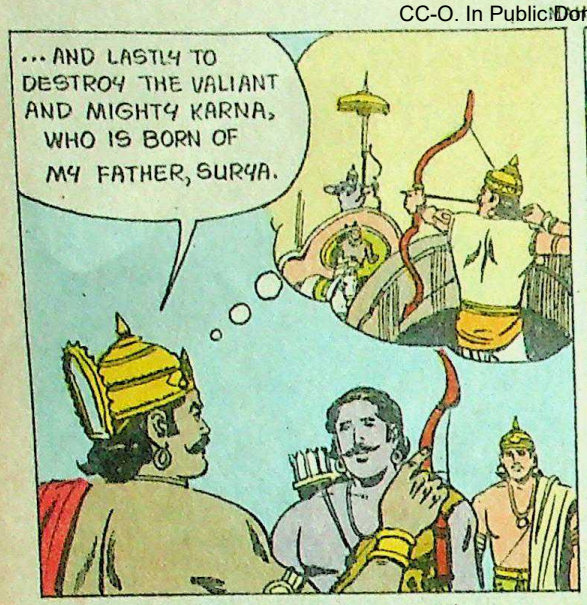

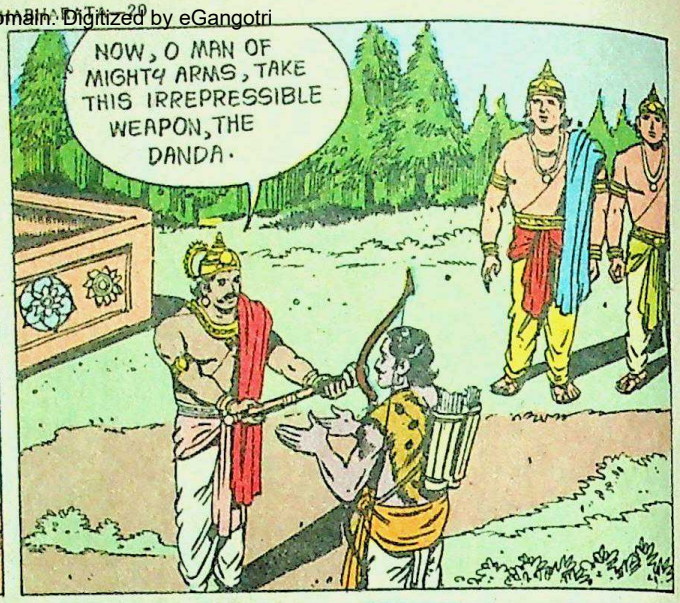

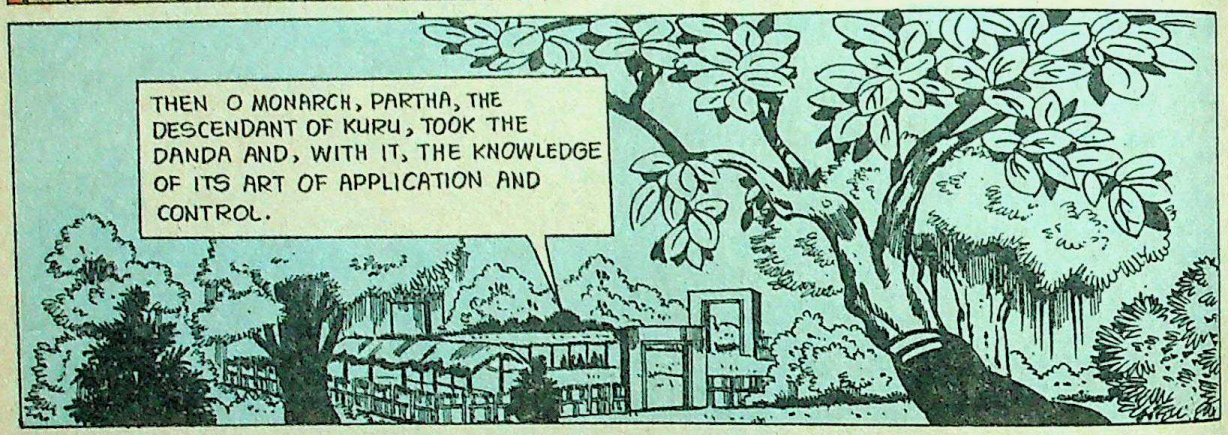

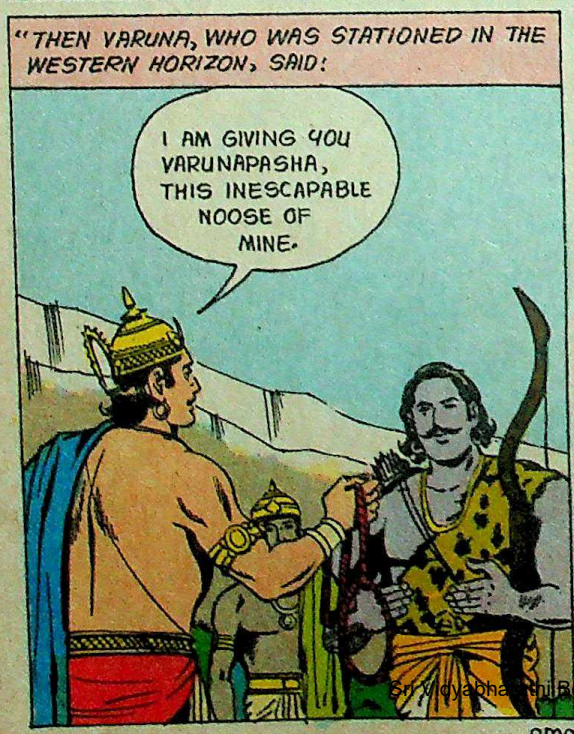

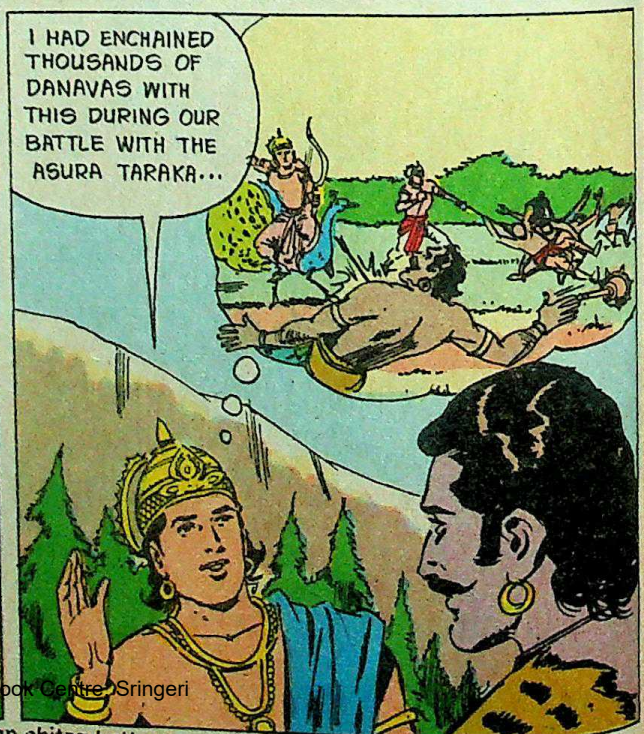

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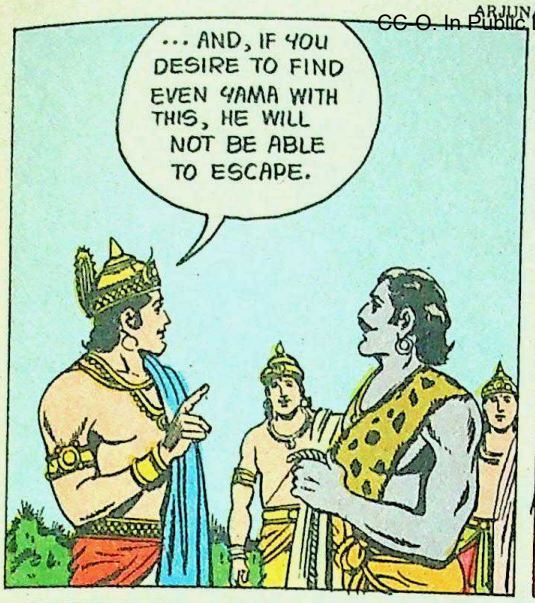

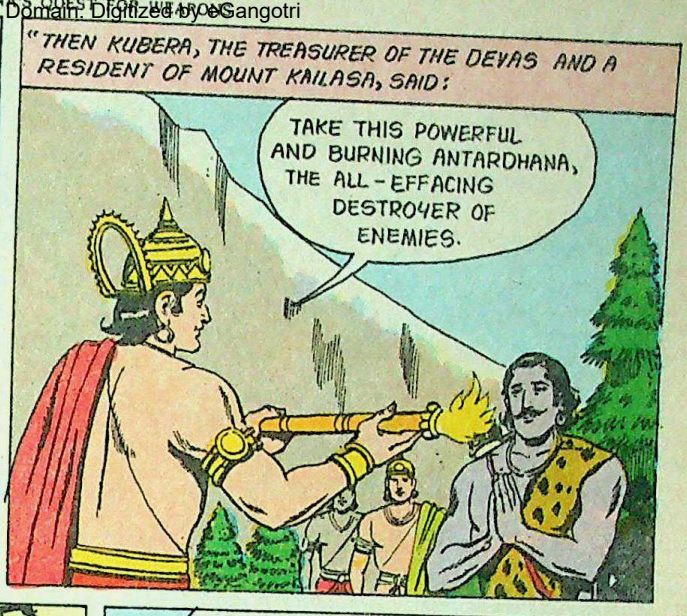

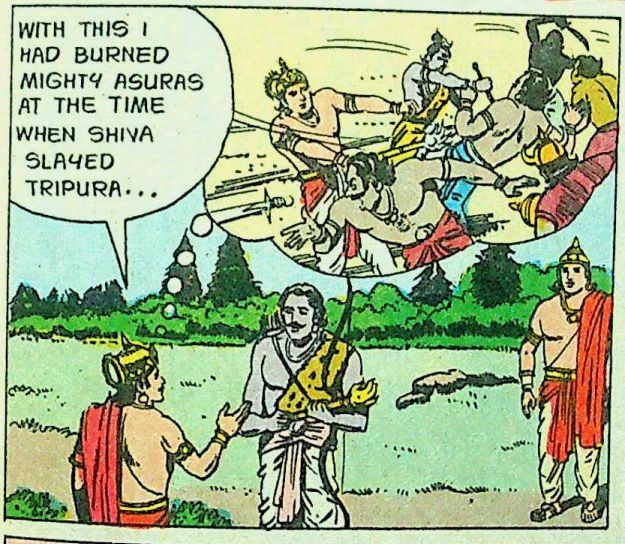

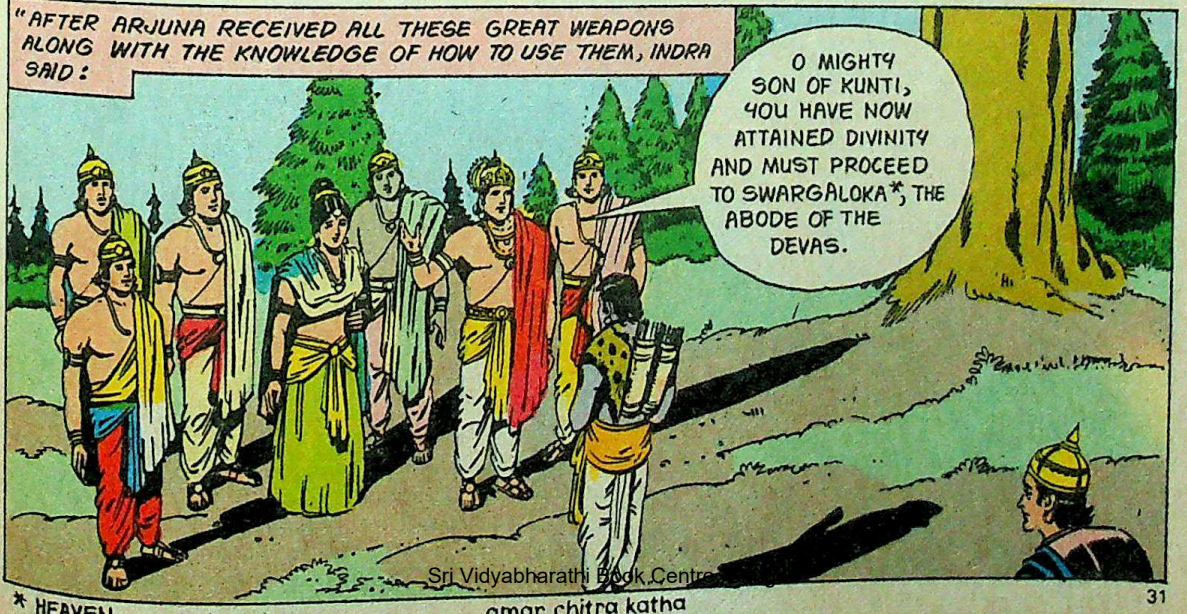

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* HEAVEN

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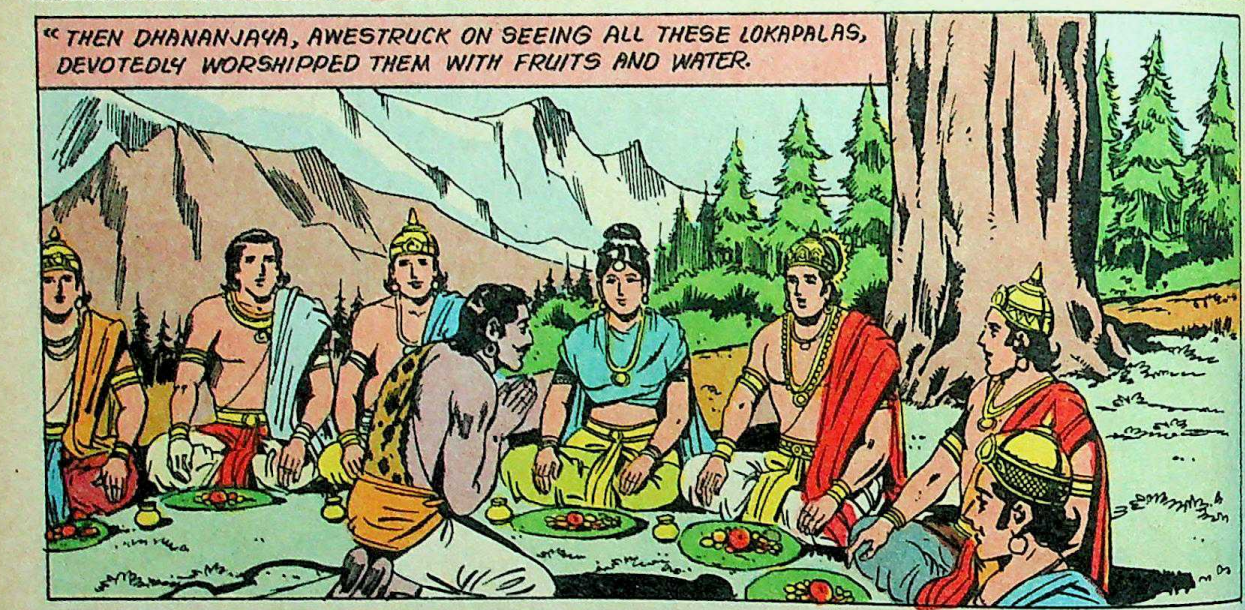

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* CHARIOTEER OF INDRA

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Mahabharata-21

ARJUNA IN INDRALOKA

HAVING ACQUIRED, O MONARCH, THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS FROM SHIVA AND THE LOKAPALAS, ARJUNA AWAITED THE GREAT VEHICLE OF LORD INDRA.

"JUST THEN THE VEHICLE GUIDED BY MATALI CAME THROUGH THE CLOUDS, ILLUMINATING THE HEAVENS.

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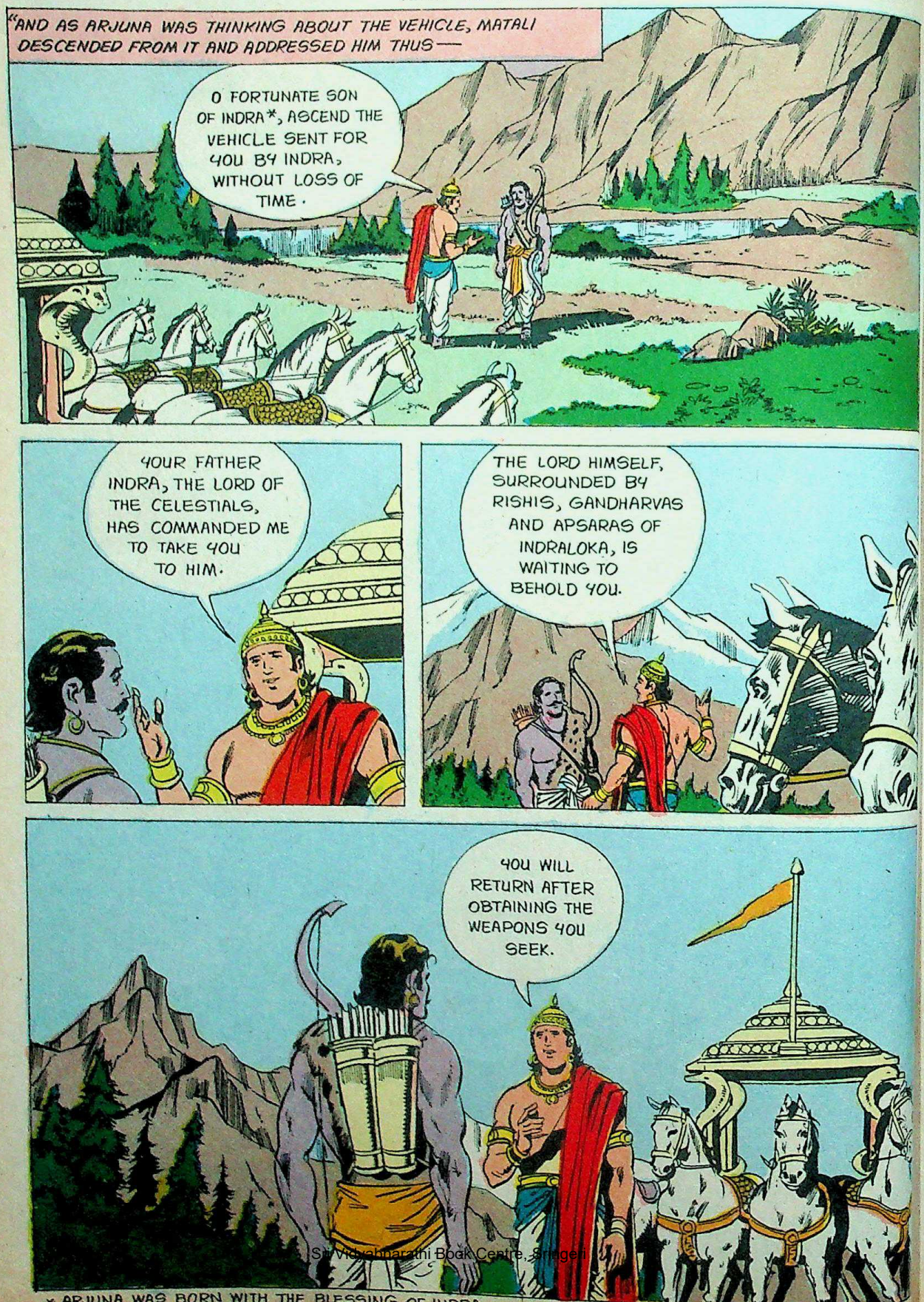

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* ARJUNA WAS BORN WITH THE BLESSING OF INDRA.

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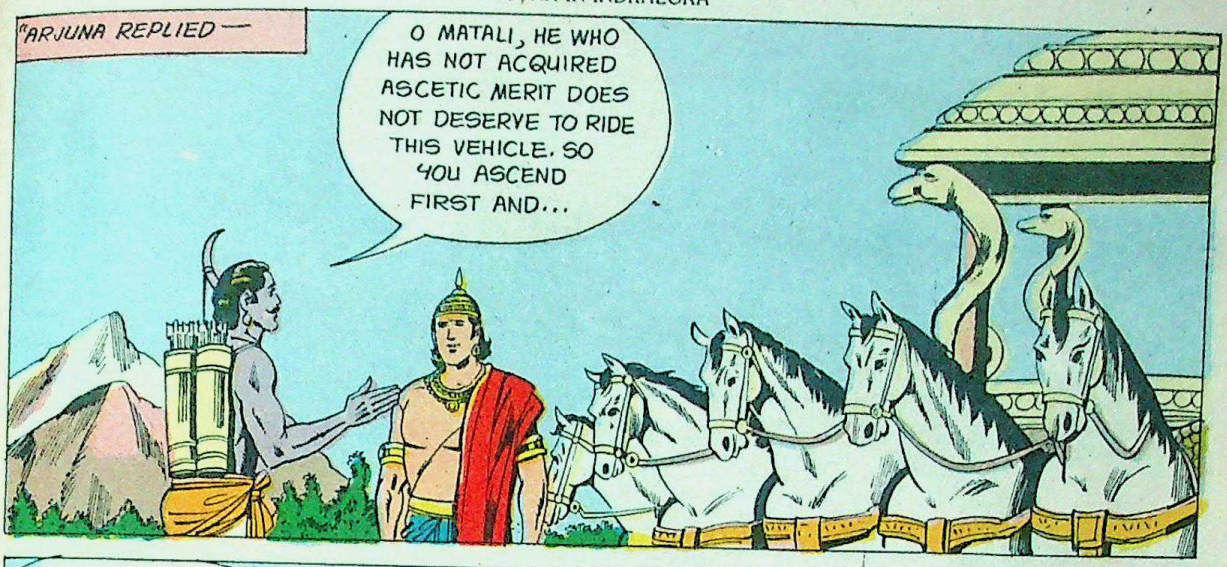

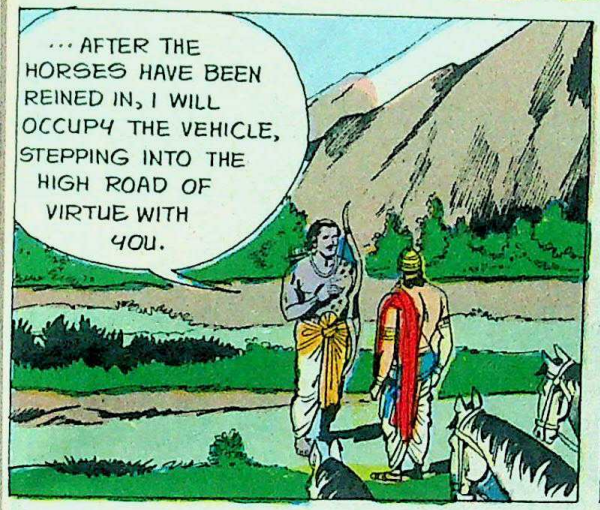

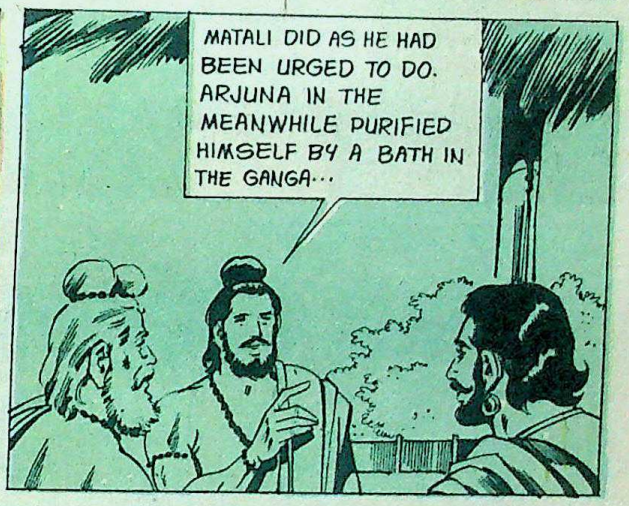

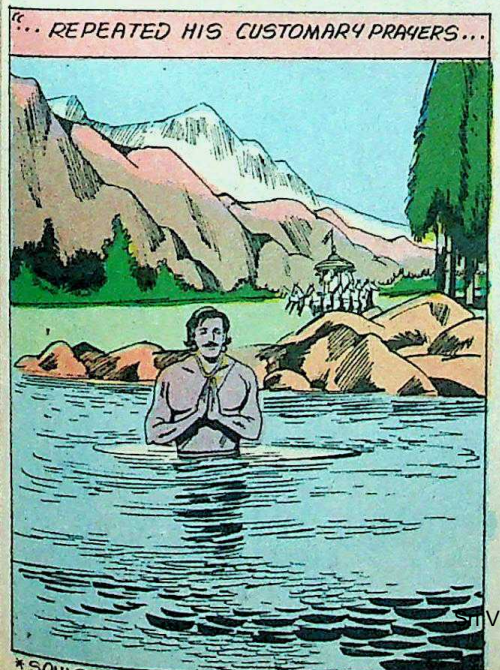

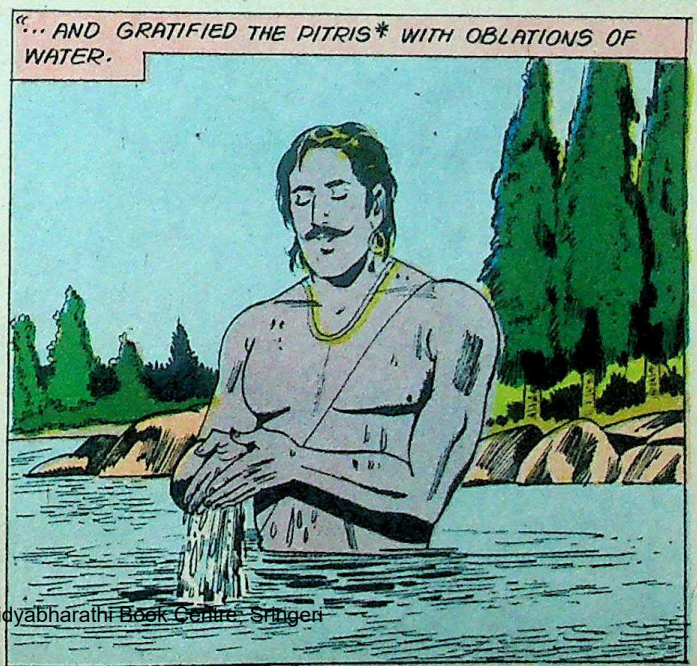

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*SOULS OF THE FORE FATHERS

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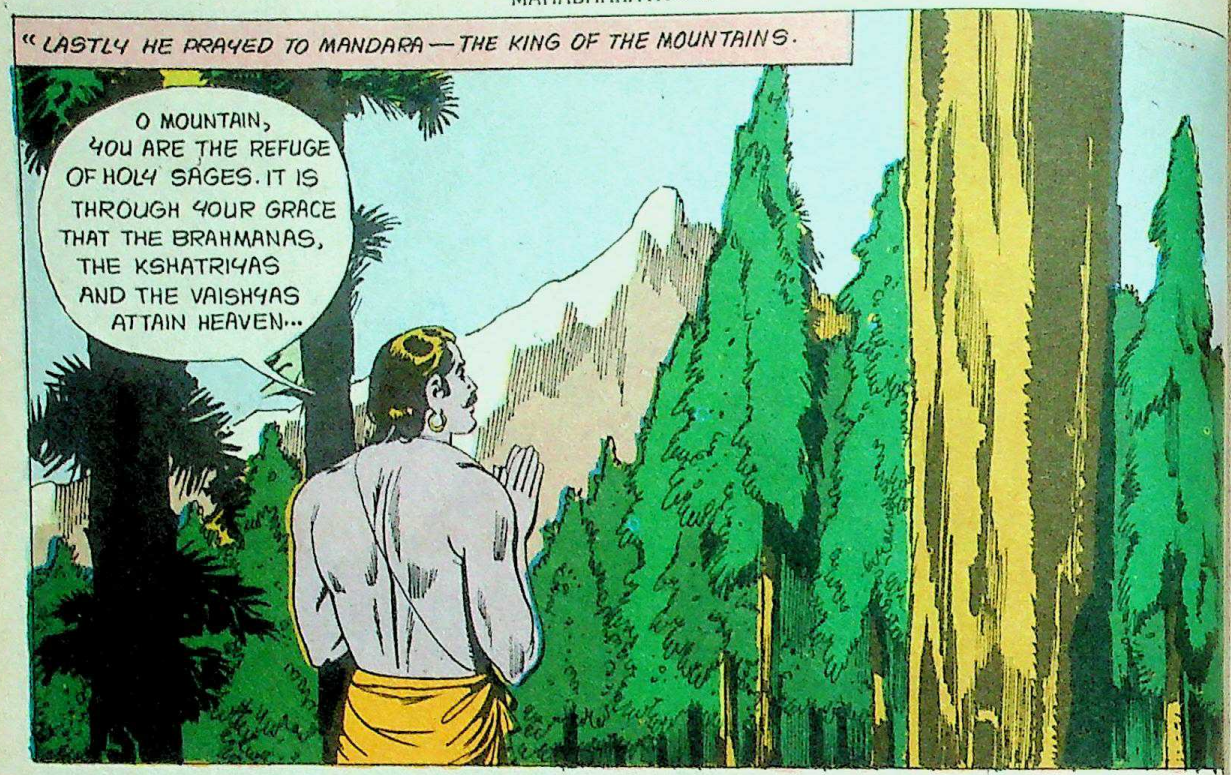

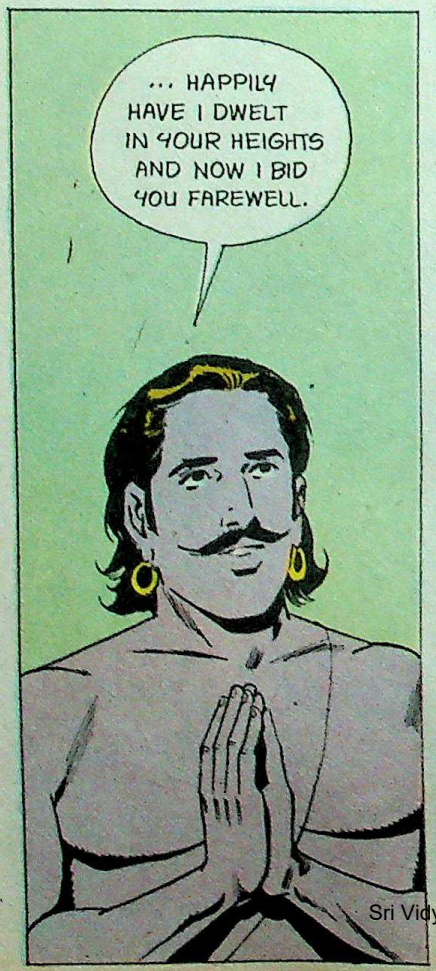

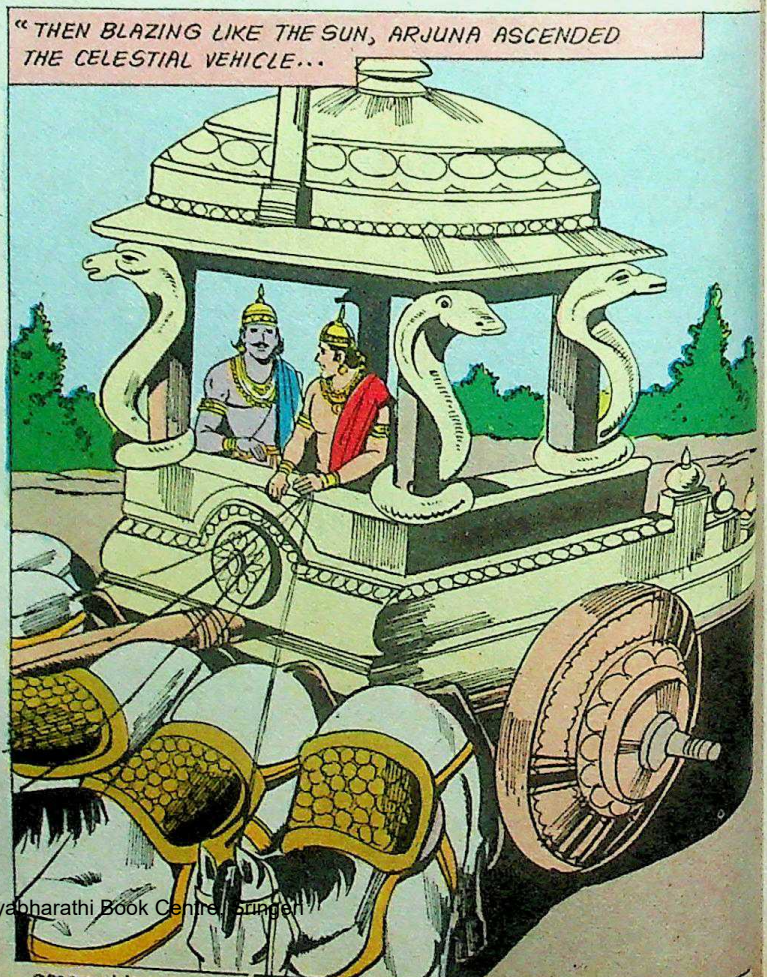

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*CELESTIAL MUSICIANS OR SINGERS + FOLLOWERS OF KUBERA.

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ARJUNA WAS FILLED WITH WONDER AND ASKED MATALI TO SPEAK TO HIM ABOUT THE HEAVENLY BEINGS.

"MATALI GLADLY REPLIED —

THESE, O SON OF KUNTI, ARE VIRTUOUS PERSONS, STATIONED IN THEIR RESPECTIVE PLACES. IT IS THESE WHOM YOU HAVE SEEN AS STARS FROM THE EARTH.

"AND FINALLY ARJUNA BEHELD AMARAVATI — THE CITY OF INDRA. IT WAS THE REGION OF THE VIRTUOUS ALONE, ADORNED WITH FLOWERS OF EVERY SEASON AND SACRED TREES OF ALL KINDS.

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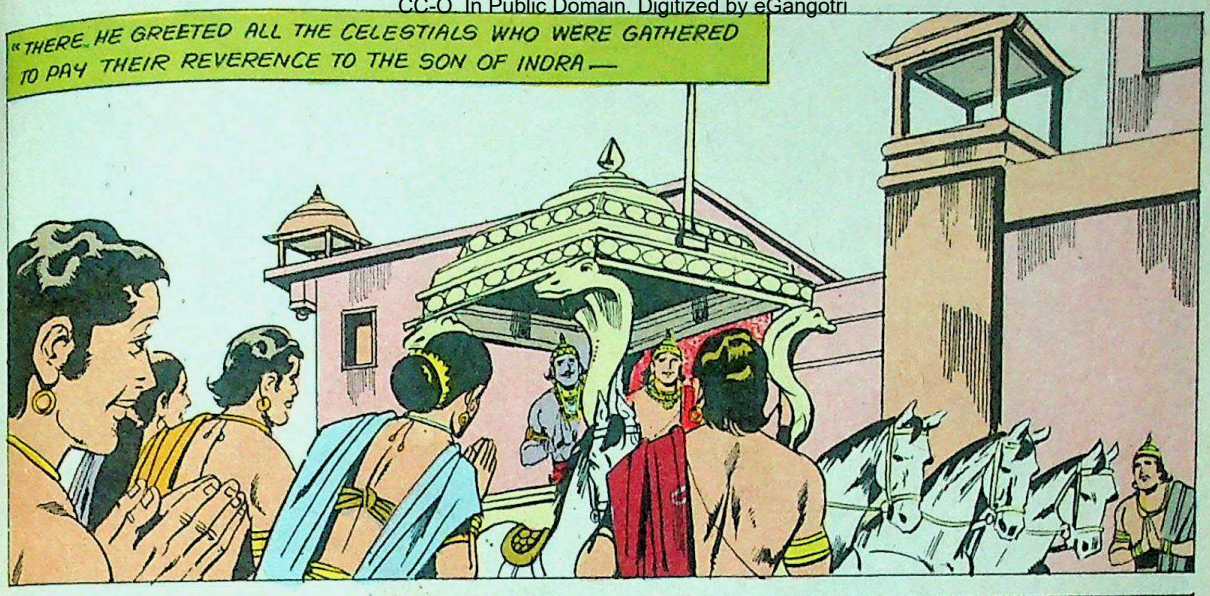

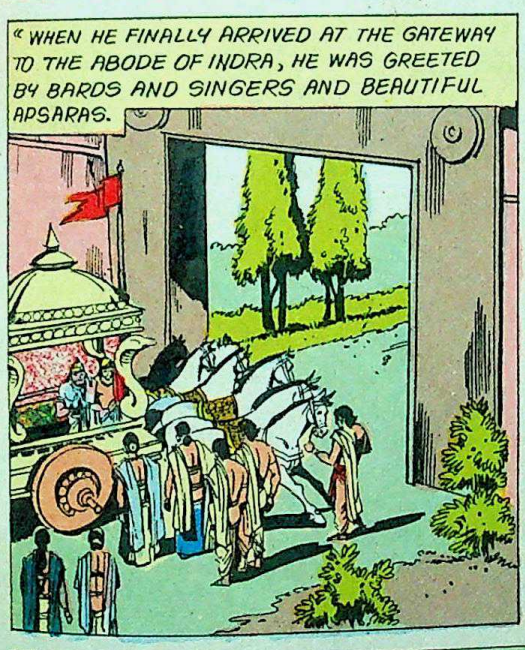

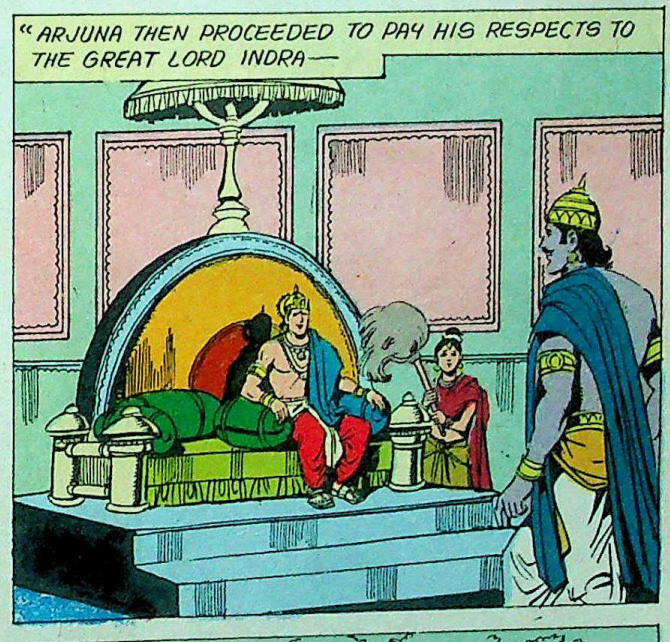

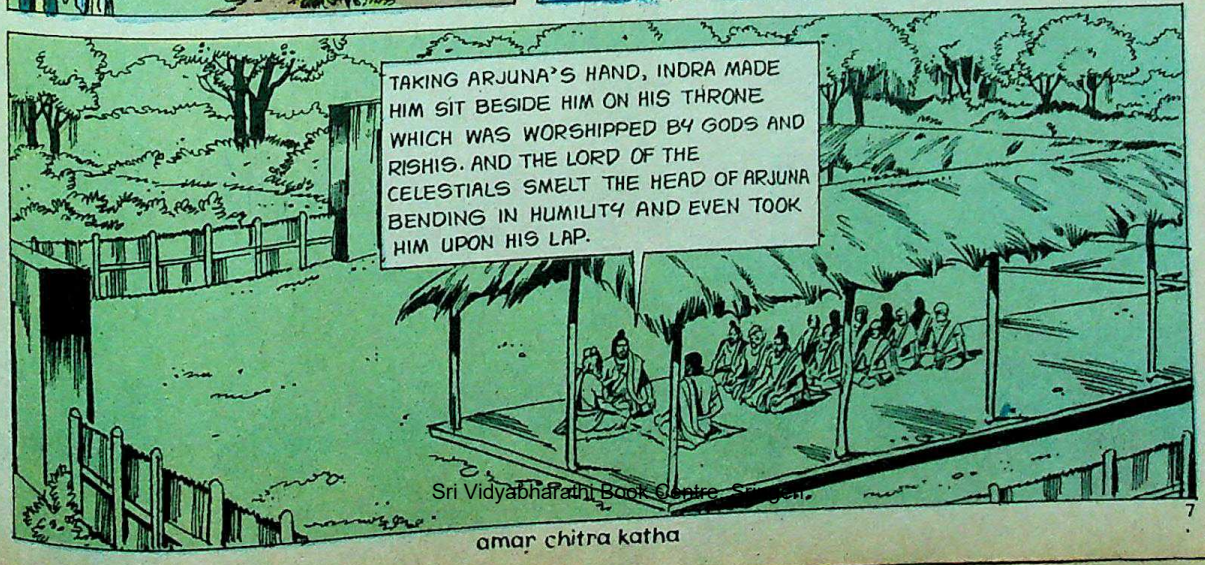

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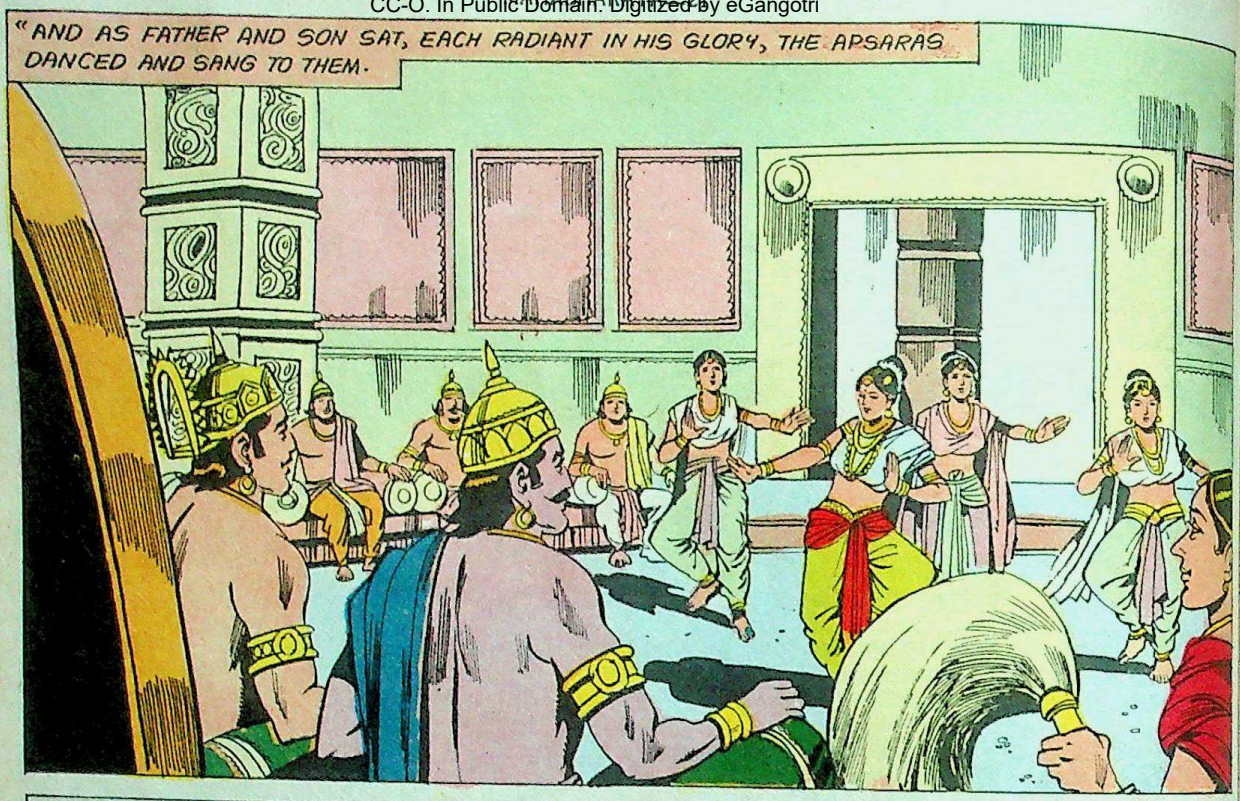

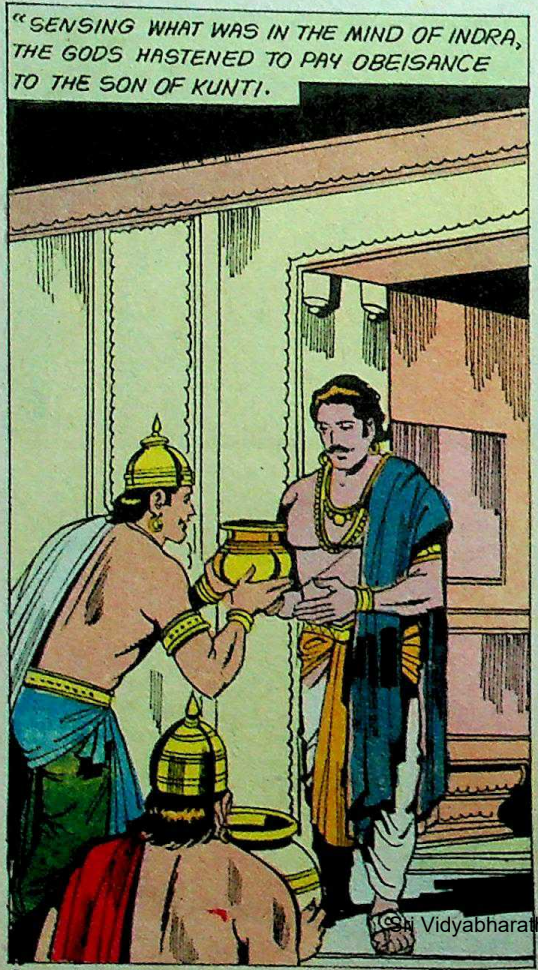

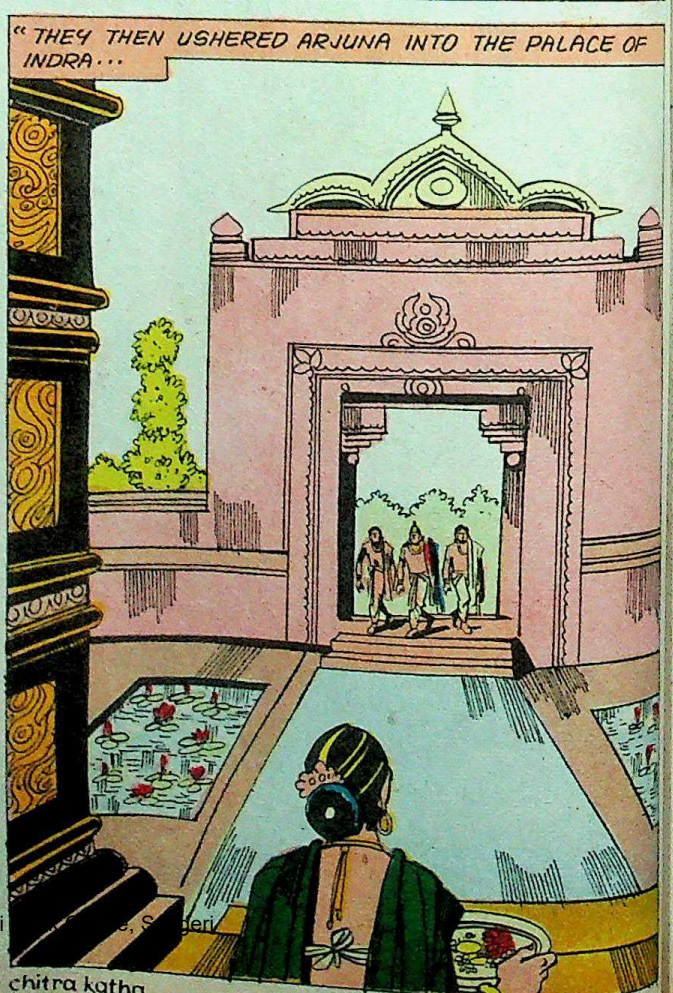

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"... WHERE HE LIVED IN COMFORT.

"WITH THE HELP OF HIS DIVINE FATHER HE CONTINUED TO ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GREAT WEAPONS ALL THE WHILE.

"INDRA GAVE AWAY THE VAJRA, HIS FAVOURITE WEAPON OF IRRESISTABLE FORCE...

"...WHICH CAUSES THE CLOUDS TO PRODUCE THUNDER AND THE PEACOCKS TO DANCE.

"THE SON OF KUNTI REMEMBERED HIS BROTHERS FOR WHOSE SAKE HE HAD SET OUT IN HIS QUEST FOR WEAPONS.

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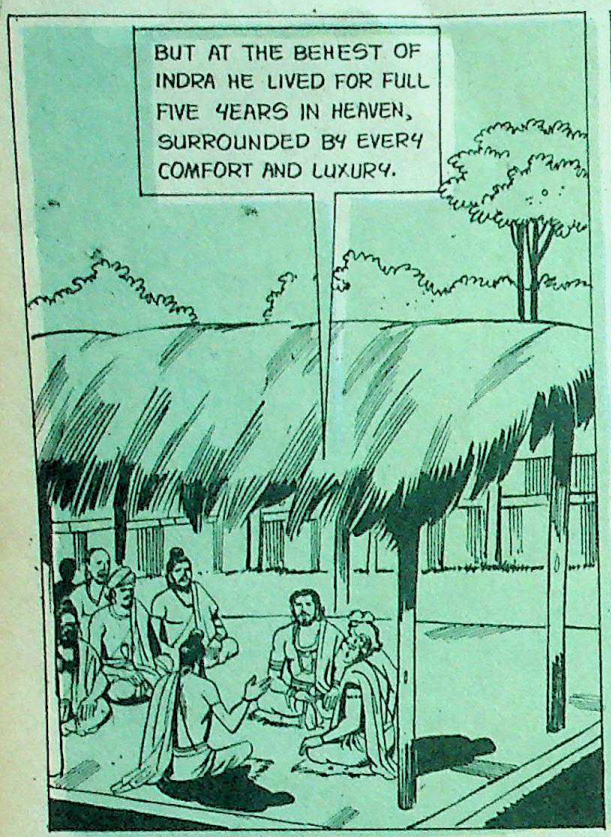

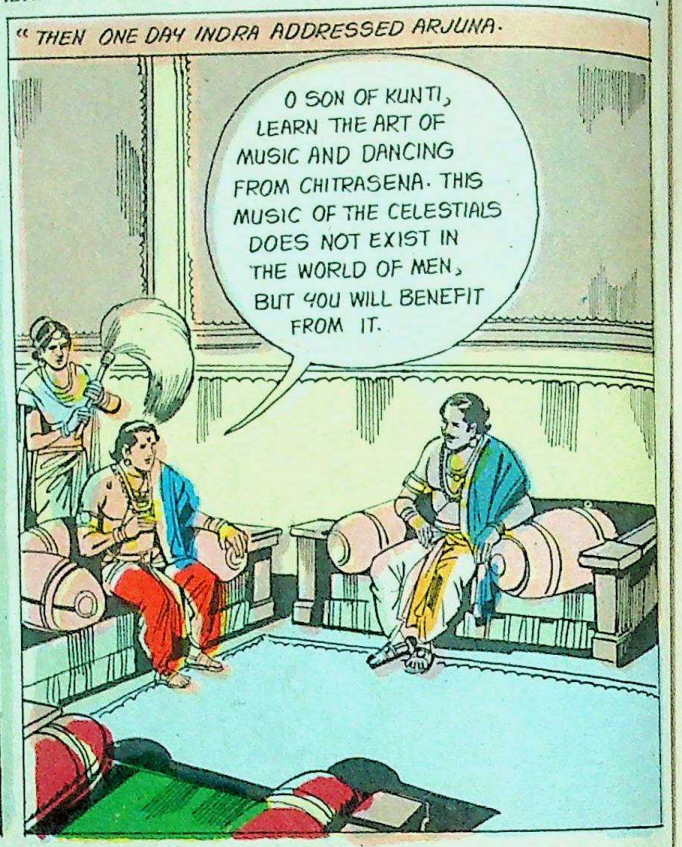

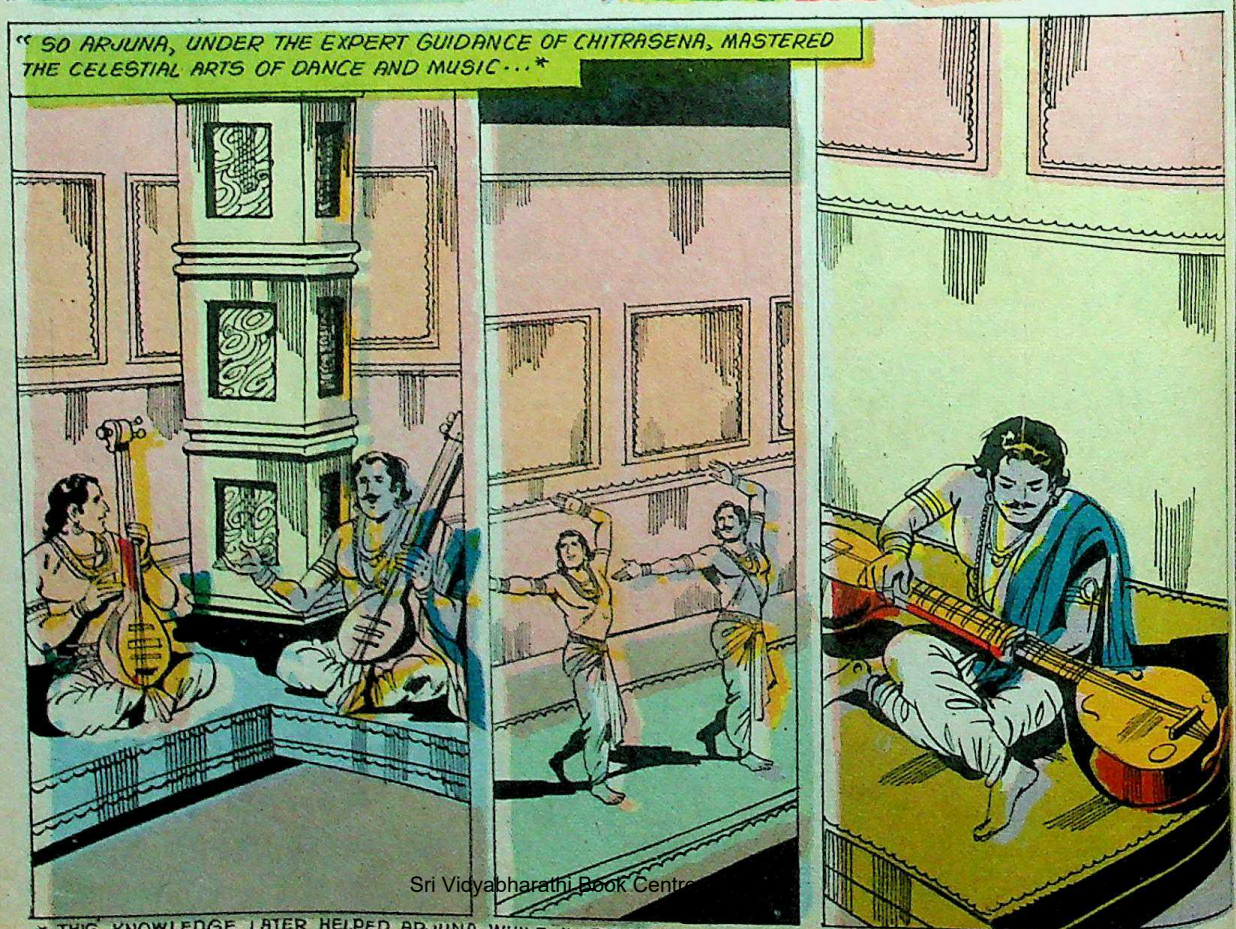

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* THIS KNOWLEDGE LATER HELPED ARJUNA WHILE IN DISGUISE.

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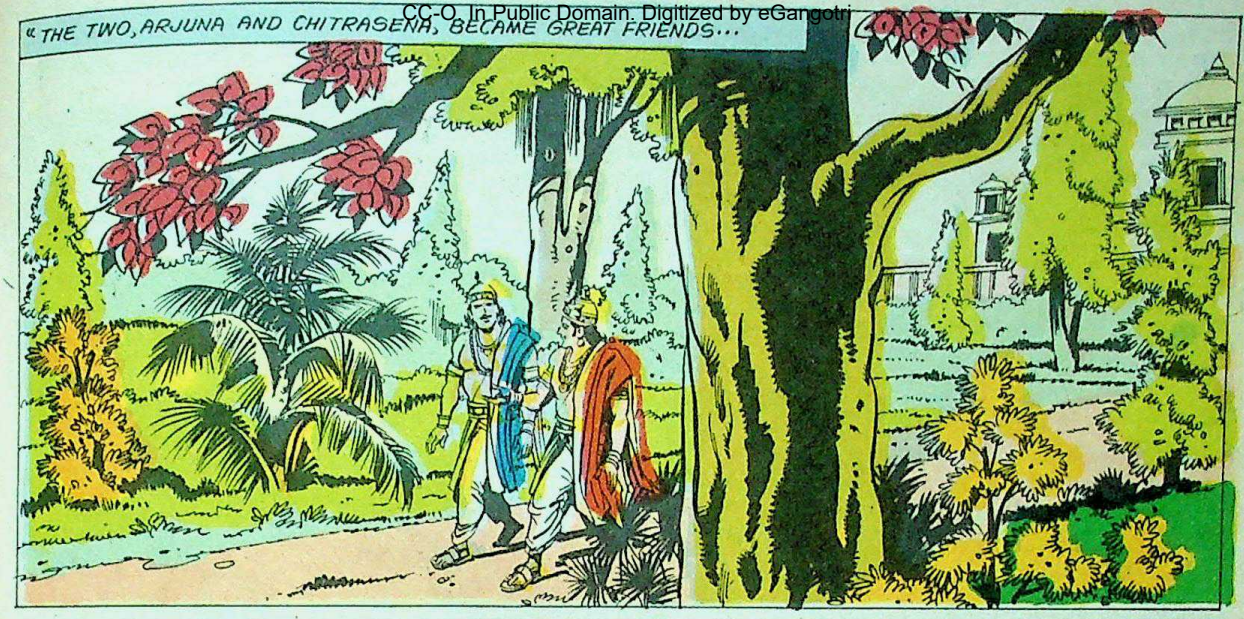

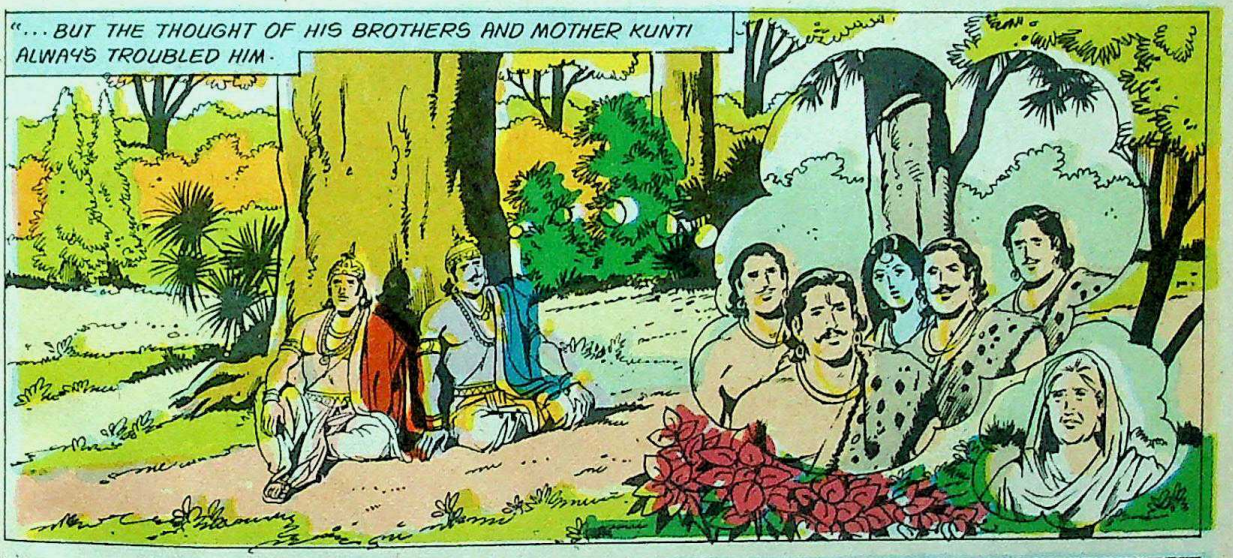

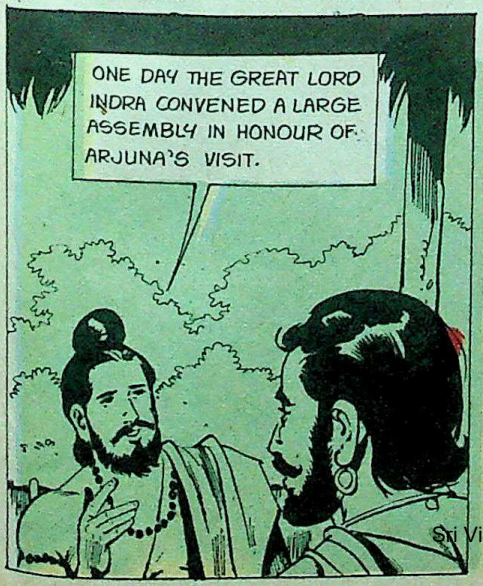

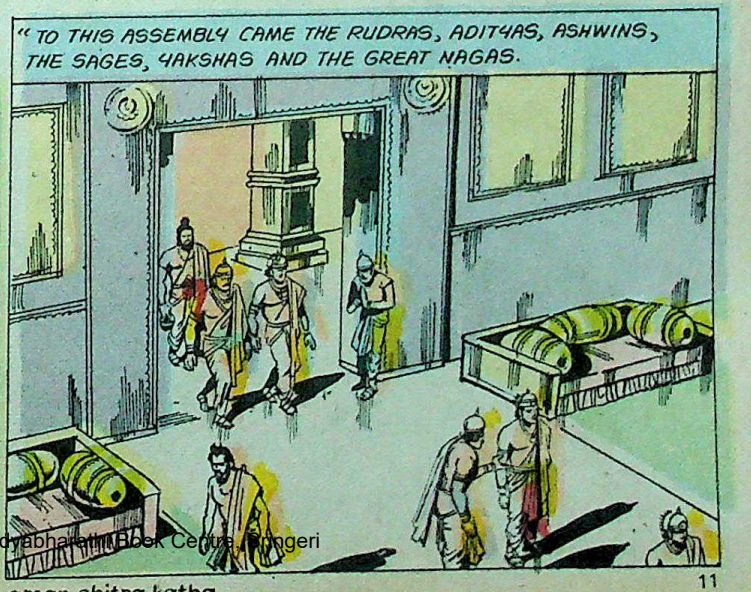

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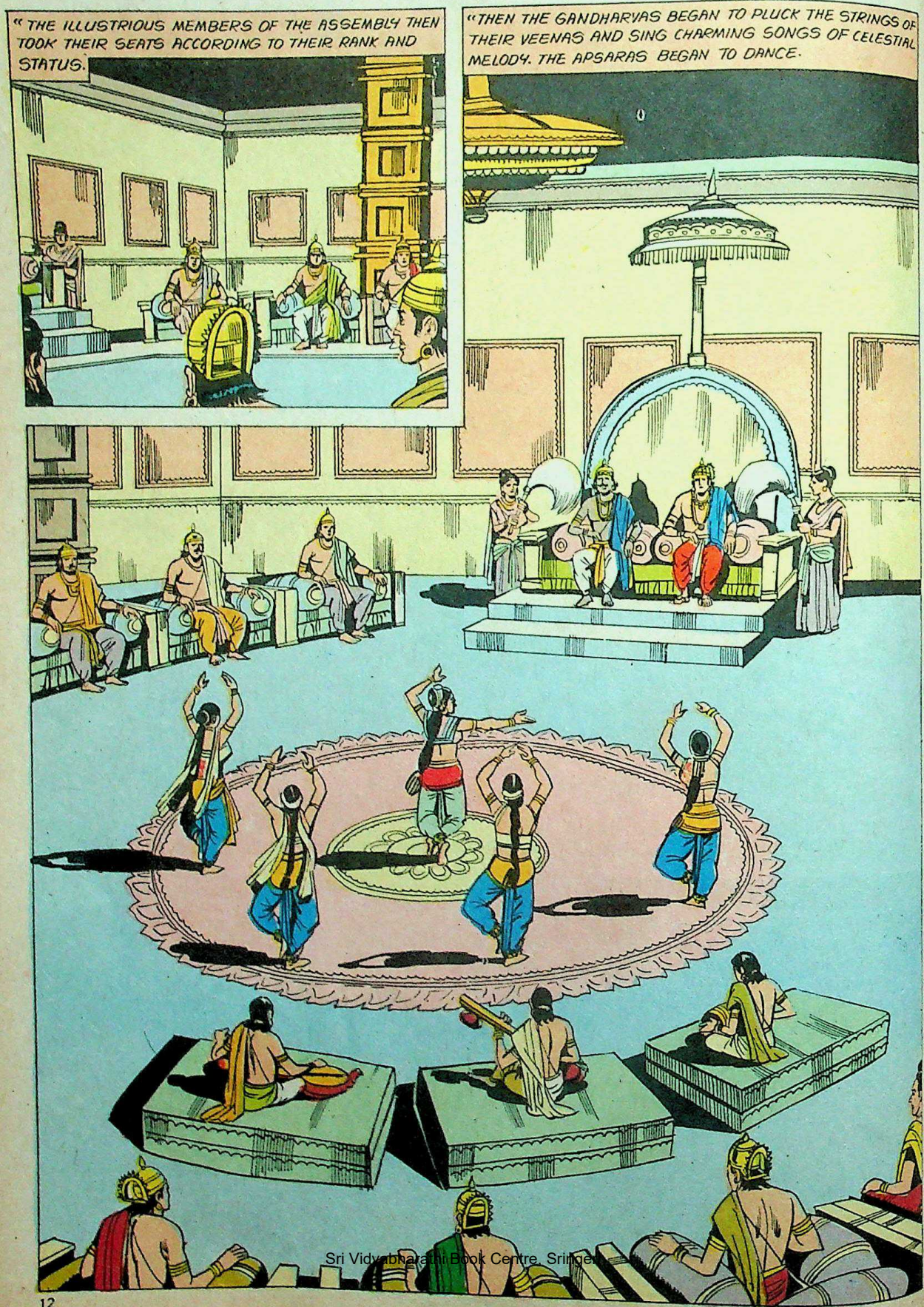

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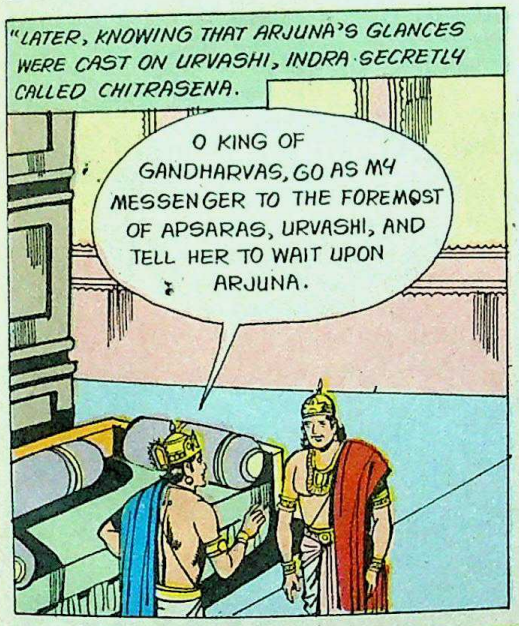

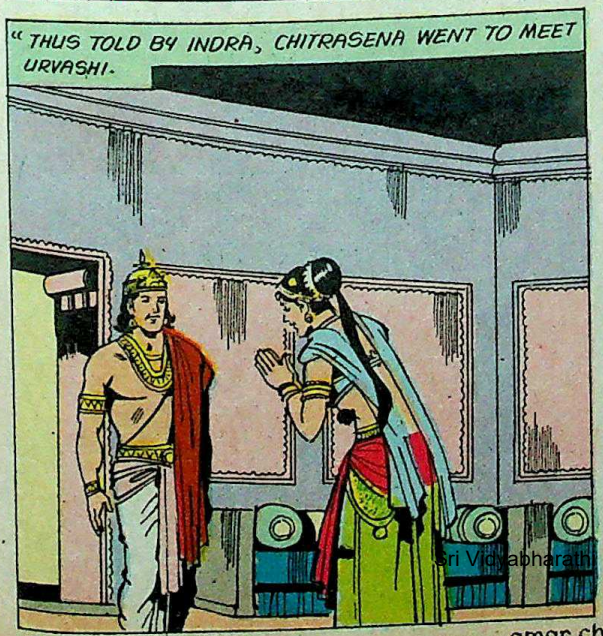

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* APSARAS: MAIDEN

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YOU KNOW HIM OF WHOM I HAVE COME TO SPEAK TO YOU. HE IS FAMED FOR HIS GRACEFULNESS, HIS NOBLE CONDUCT, VALOUR, INTELLIGENCE AND UNSURPASSED STRENGTH.

ARJUNA, BY VIRTUE OF HIS DEVOTIONS, HIS LINEAGE AND HIS VARIOUS SKILLS IS CAPABLE OF PROTECTING OUR CELESTIAL REGIONS. HE IS EQUAL EVEN TO INDRA.

IT IS FOR HIS SAKE, O FAIR MAIDEN, THAT OUR LORD INDRA WANTS YOUR ASSISTANCE. LET THE HERO BE MADE TO PARTAKE OF THE DELIGHTS OF HEAVEN AT YOUR FEET.

"URVASHI, INCOMPARABLY BEAUTIFUL, SMILED AND WITH A GLAD HEART SHE ANSWERED —

IN OBEDIENCE TO INDRA, OUT OF RESPECT FOR YOU AND MOVED BY THE SPLENDOUR OF THE VIRTUES OF ARJUNA, I ACCEPT HIM AS MY BELOVED. KAMADEVA* HAS CAST HIS SPELL ON ME.

URVASHI OF RAPTUROUS SMILES, SENT AWAY CHITRASENA AND PREPARED HERSELF TO VISIT ARJUNA.

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* THE GOD OF LOVE.

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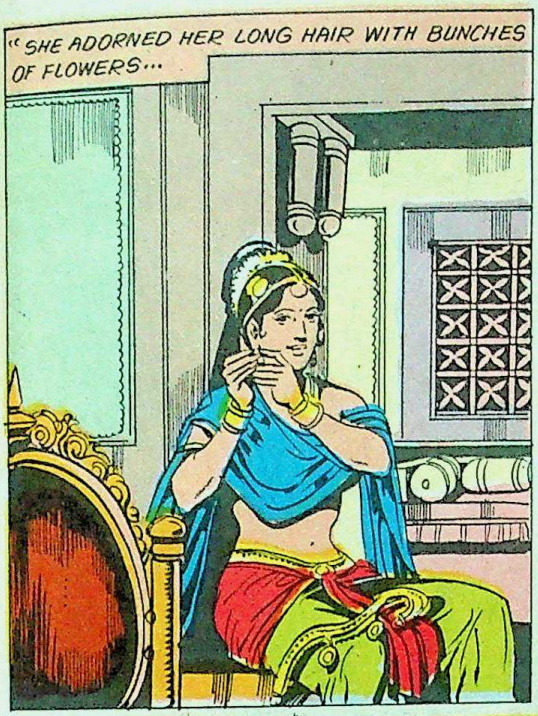

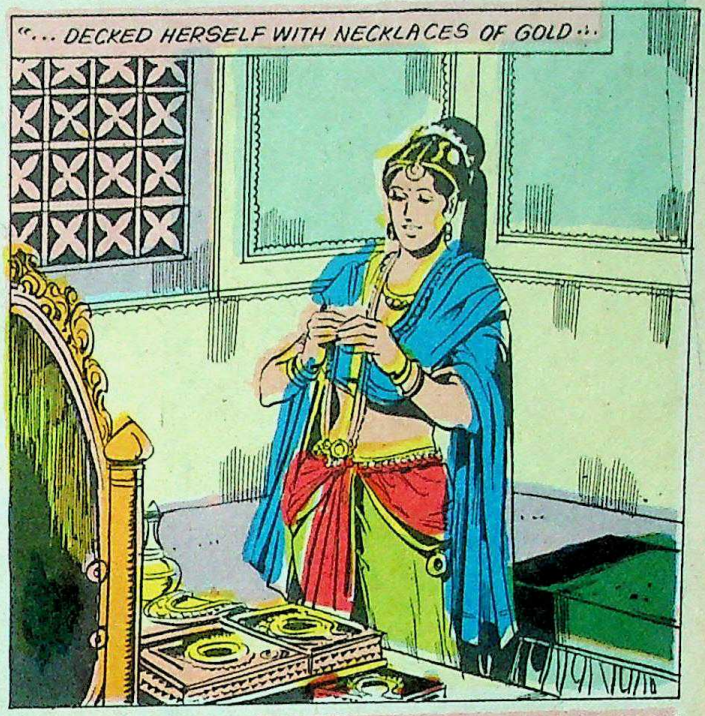

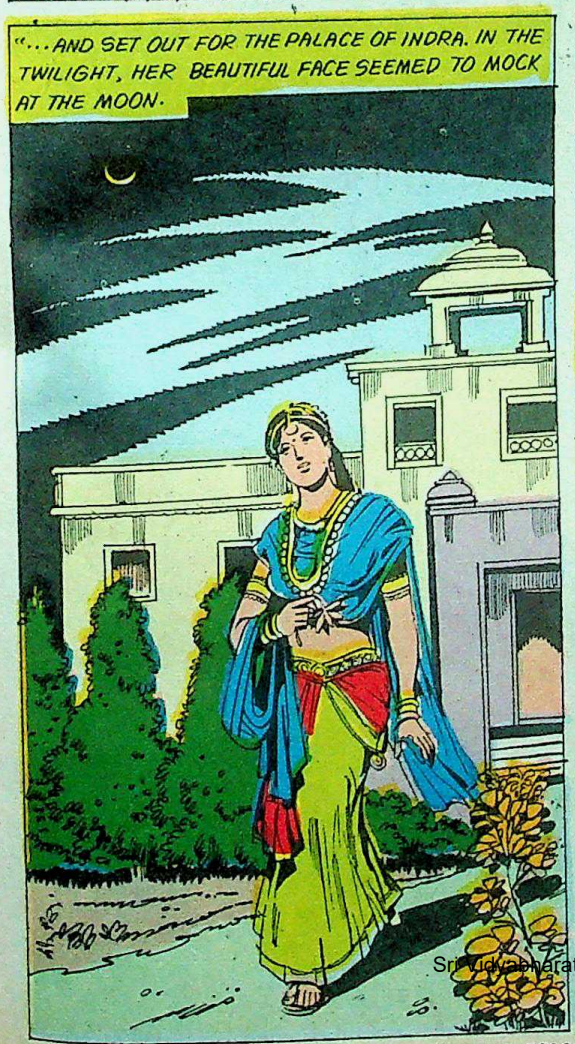

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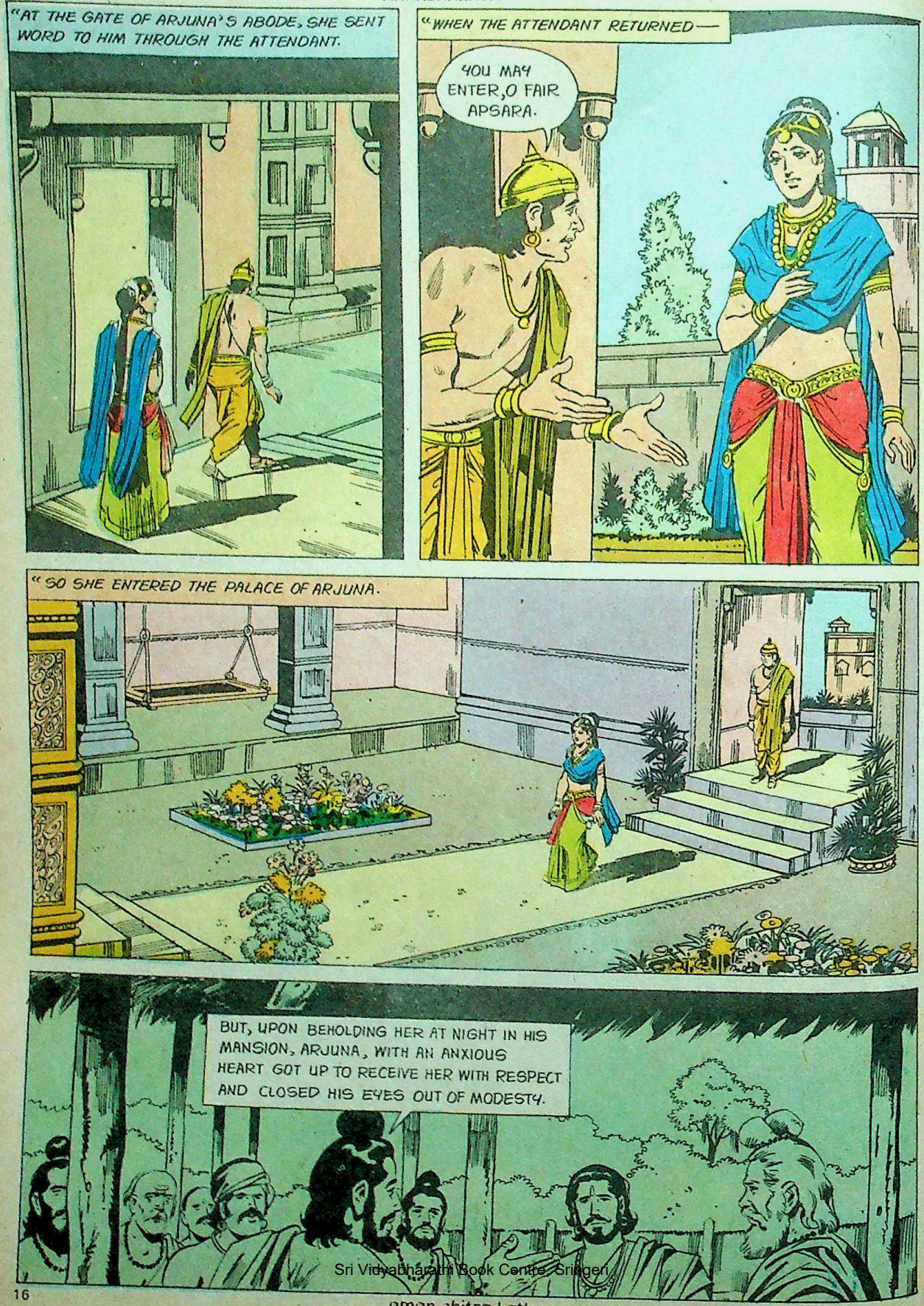

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"ARJUNA SALUTED HER IN THE MANNER AN ELDER IS SALUTED AND OFFERED HER WORSHIP.

O FOREMOST OF APSARAS, I BOW TO YOU IN REVERENCE. COMMAND ME AND I SHALL WAIT UPON YOU AS A SERVANT.

HEARING ARJUNA SPEAKING THUS, O MONARCH, URVASHI FLEW INTO A RAGE. SHE THEN EXPLAINED TO HIM WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED BETWEEN HER AND CHITRASENA.

CHITRASENA CAME TO ME AT THE BEHEST OF LORD INDRA, WITH A COMMAND FOR ME TO WAIT UPON YOU.

THUS COMMANDED BY YOUR FATHER AND IMPELLED BY KAMADEVA I WISH TO SERVE YOU.

"HEARING HER SPEAK IN THIS MANNER, ARJUNA WAS OVERCOME WITH EMBARRASSMENT. SHUTTING HIS EARS WITH HIS HANDS HE SAID —

O BLESSED LADY, IT CAUSES ME GREAT UNHAPPINESS TO HEAR SUCH WORDS FROM YOU.

YOU ARE WORTHY OF BEING THE WIFE OF SOMEONE SUPERIOR. I RESPECT YOU LIKE MY MOTHER KUNTI OR SHACHI THE QUEEN OF INDRA.

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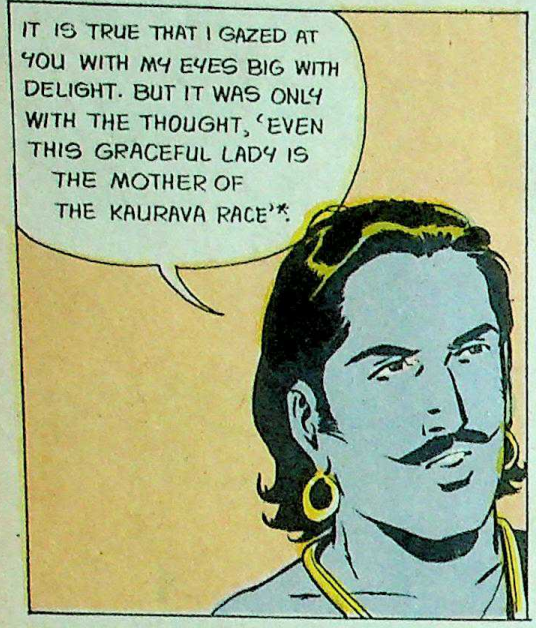

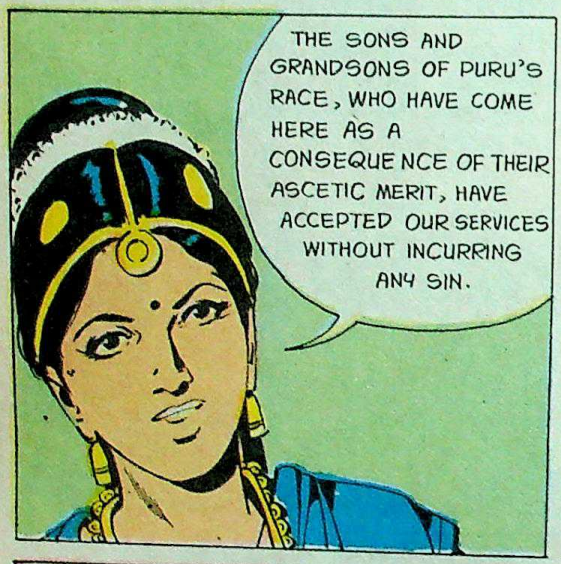

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* URVASHI WAS THE WIFE OF PURURAVA, AN ANCESTOR OF THE KAURAVAS

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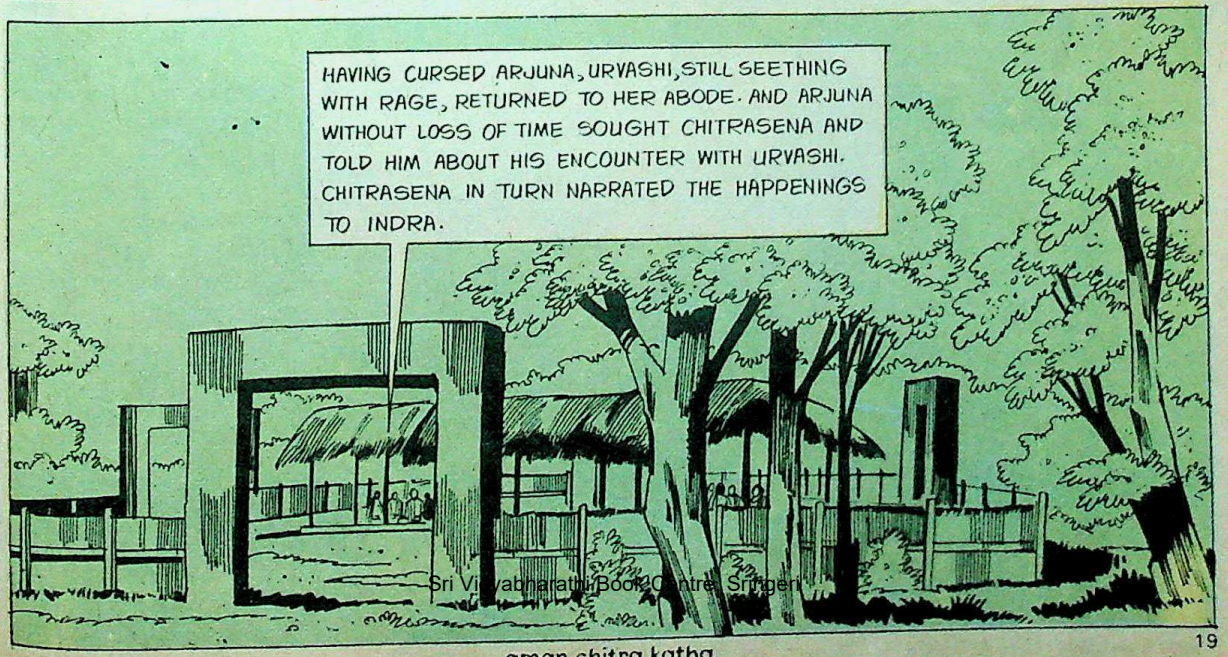

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"INDRA THEN CALLED FOR HIS SON IN PRIVATE AND SMILINGLY CONSOLED HIM.

MY MIGHTY SON, YOU HAVE SURPASSED EVEN GREAT RISHIS BY THE PATIENCE AND SELF-CONTROL YOU HAVE SHOWN.

THE CURSE THAT URVASHI HAS INFLICTED UPON YOU WILL BE TO YOUR BENEFIT AND STAND YOU IN GOOD STEAD.

HOW?

YOU HAVE TO PASS THE THIRTEENTH YEAR OF YOUR EXILE INCOGNITO. THAT IS THE TIME WHEN THE SPELL CAST ON YOU BY URVASHI WILL WORK. AT THE END OF THAT YEAR YOU WILL REGAIN YOUR MANHOOD.

"A RELIEVED ARJUNA THEN CEASED TO THINK ABOUT THE CURSE AND SPENT THE REST OF HIS DAYS IN HEAVEN, SPORTING WITH CHITRASENA.

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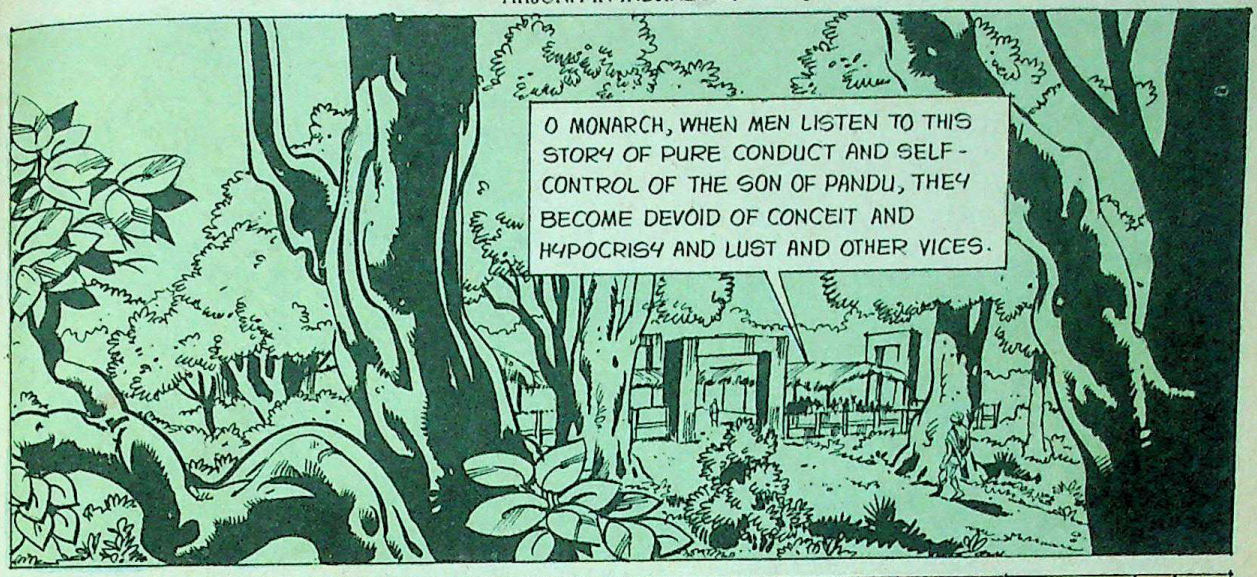

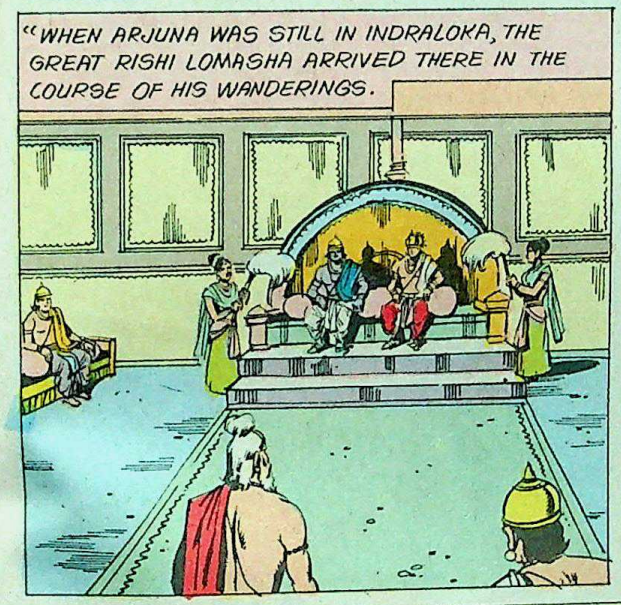

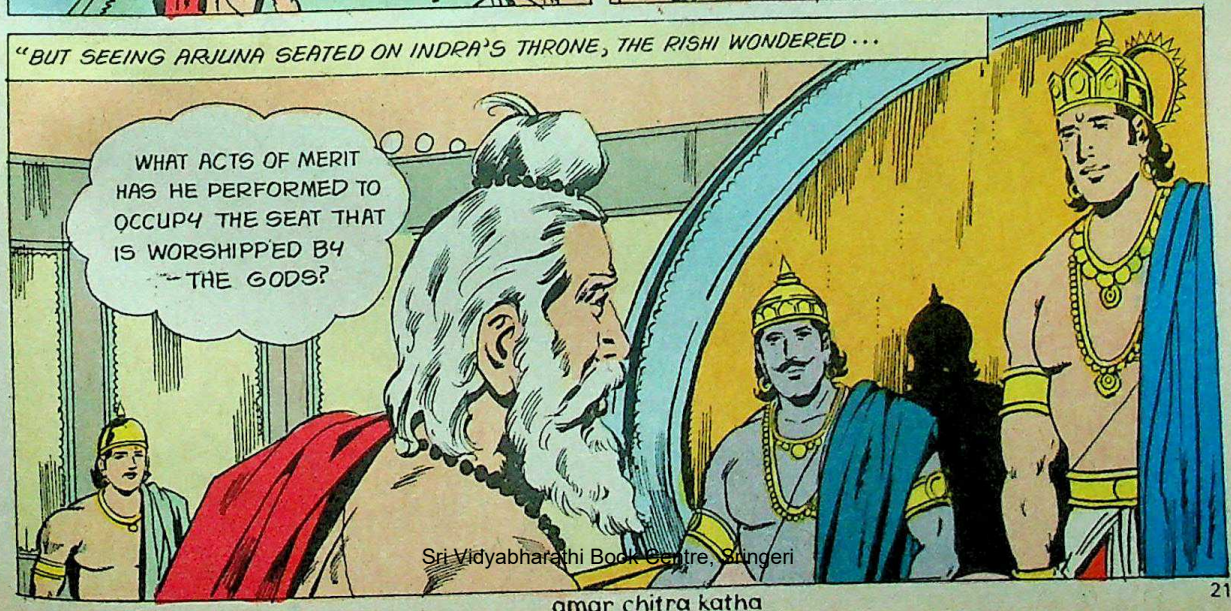

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"LORD INDRA PERCEIVED THE THOUGHTS OF LOMASHA AND SAID:

O BRAHMARSHI, ARJUNA IS NO MORTAL, THOUGH HE HAS BEEN BORN AMONG MEN.

HE IS BORN OF KUNTI WITH MY GRACE AND HE HAS COME HERE TO ACQUIRE SOME WEAPONS WHICH HE WILL USE TO CLEANSE THE EARTH OF ALL EVIL.

"O BRAHMANA, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA ARE NONE OTHER THAN NARA AND NARAYANA* WHO HAVE BEEN BORN ON EARTH TO ENSURE THE PREVALENCE OF DHARMA.

* NARA AND NARAYANA WERE GREAT SAGES WHO HAD BEEN BORN ON EARTH TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASK OF THE GODS.

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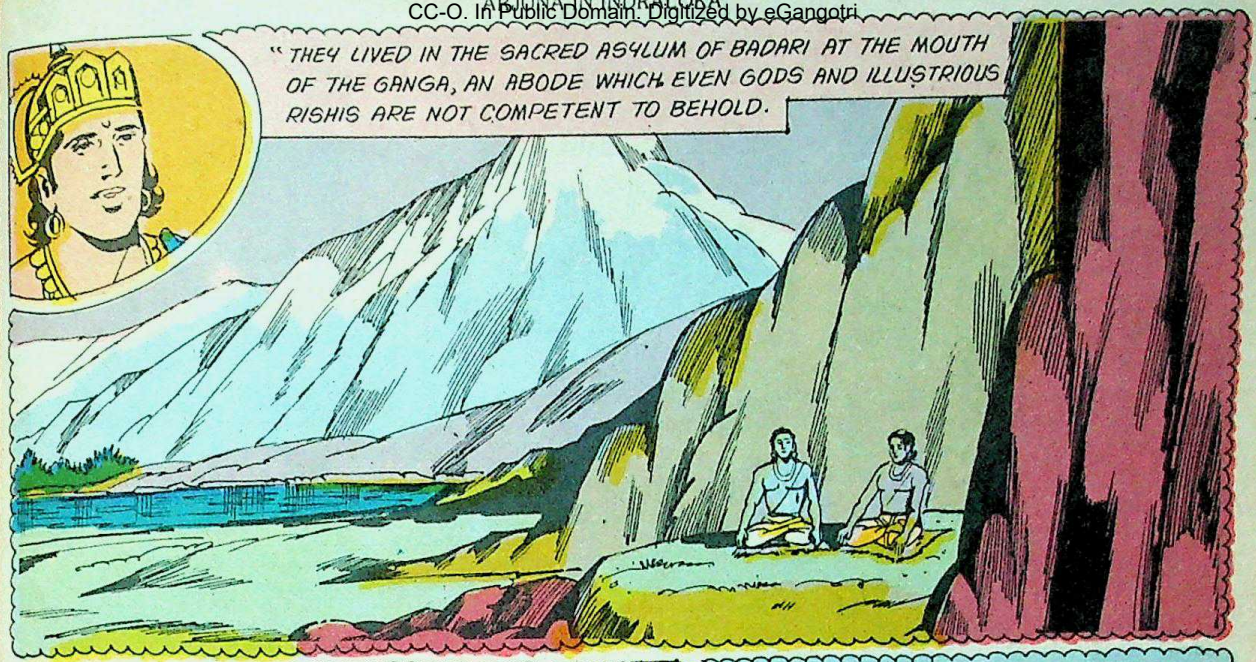

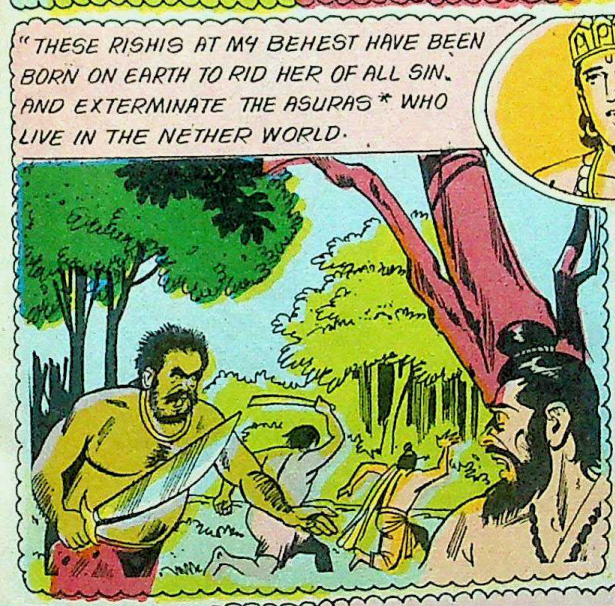

* DEMONS

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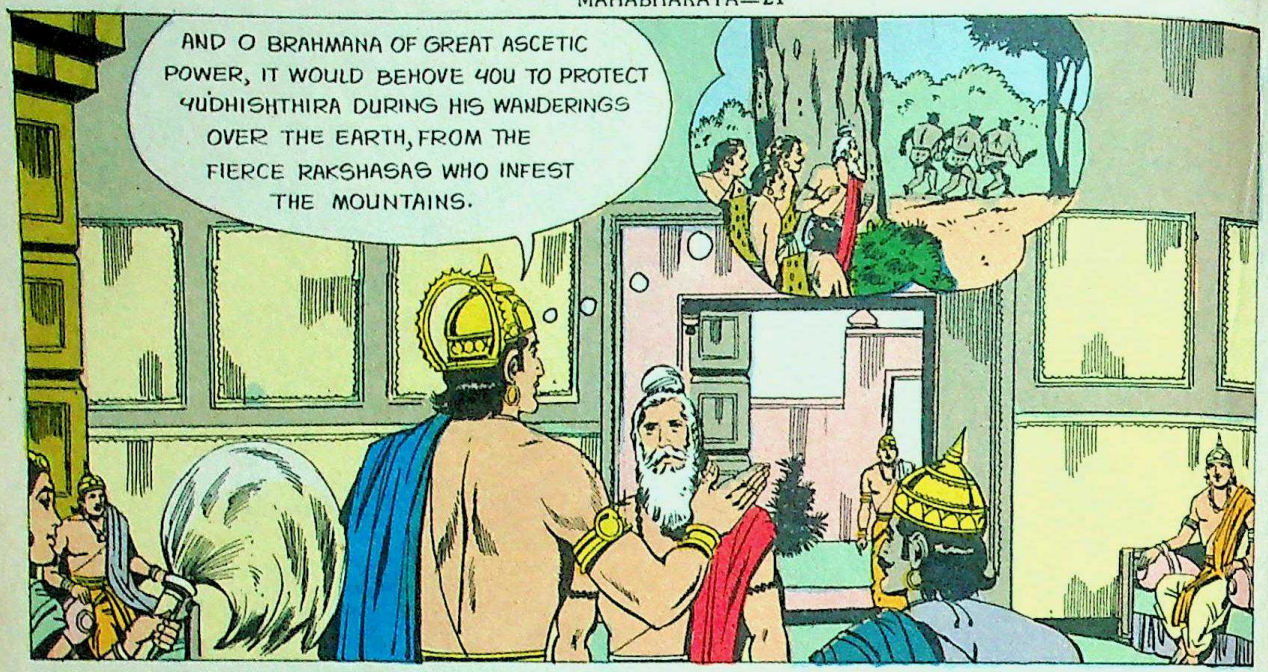

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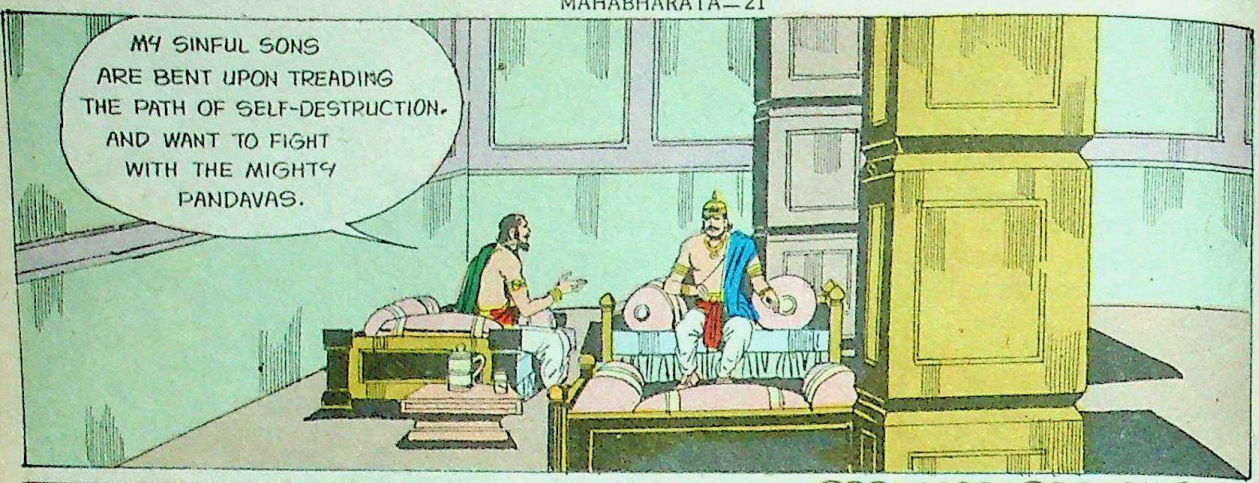

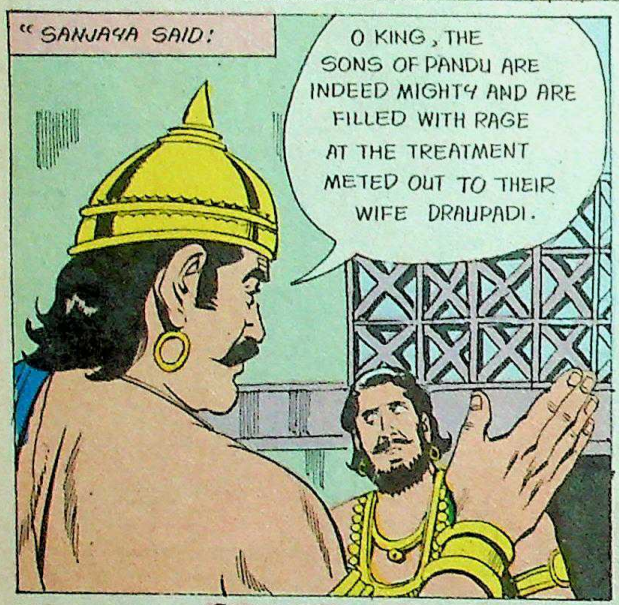

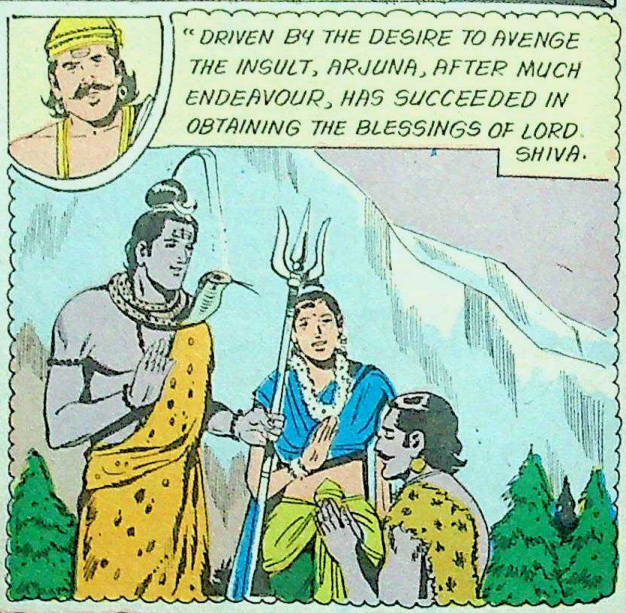

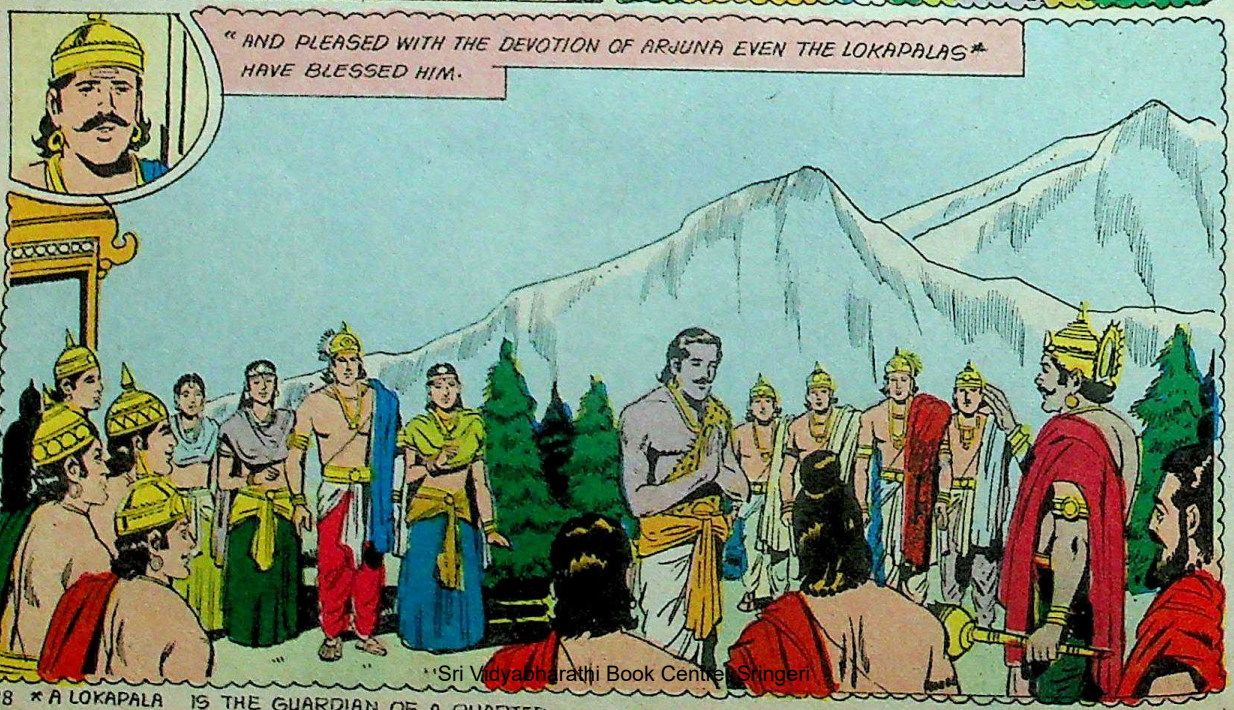

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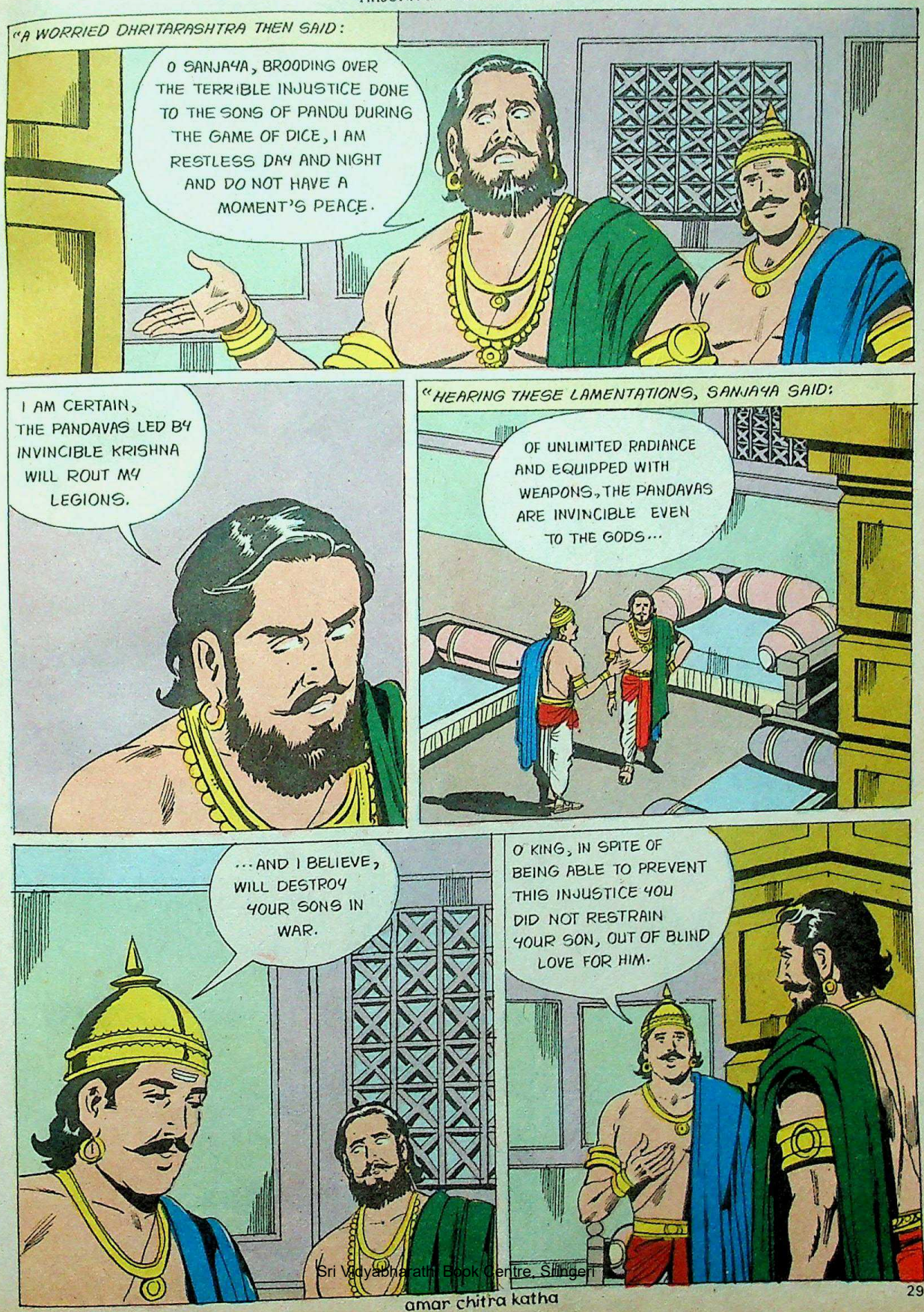

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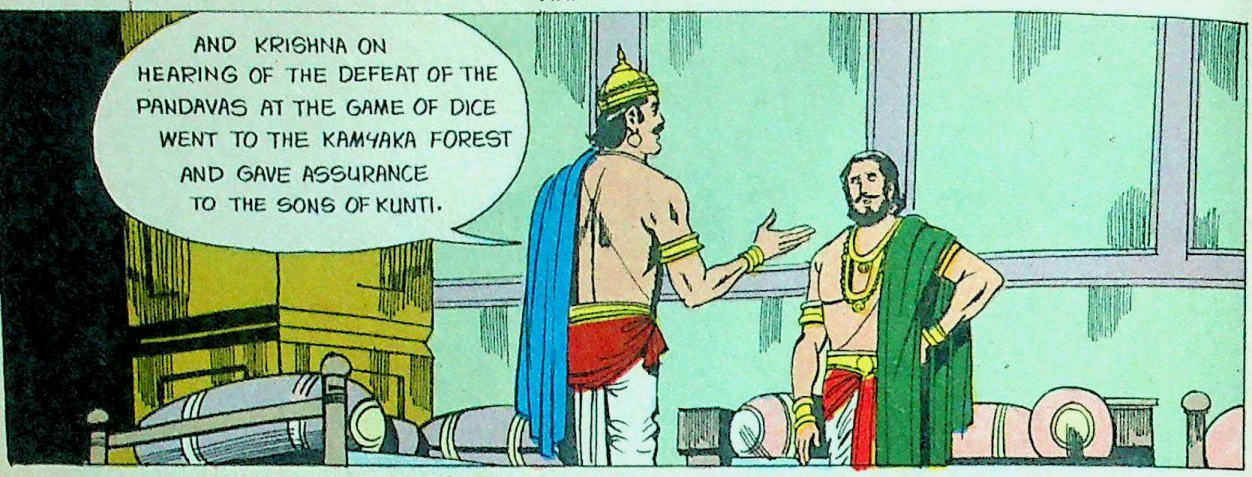

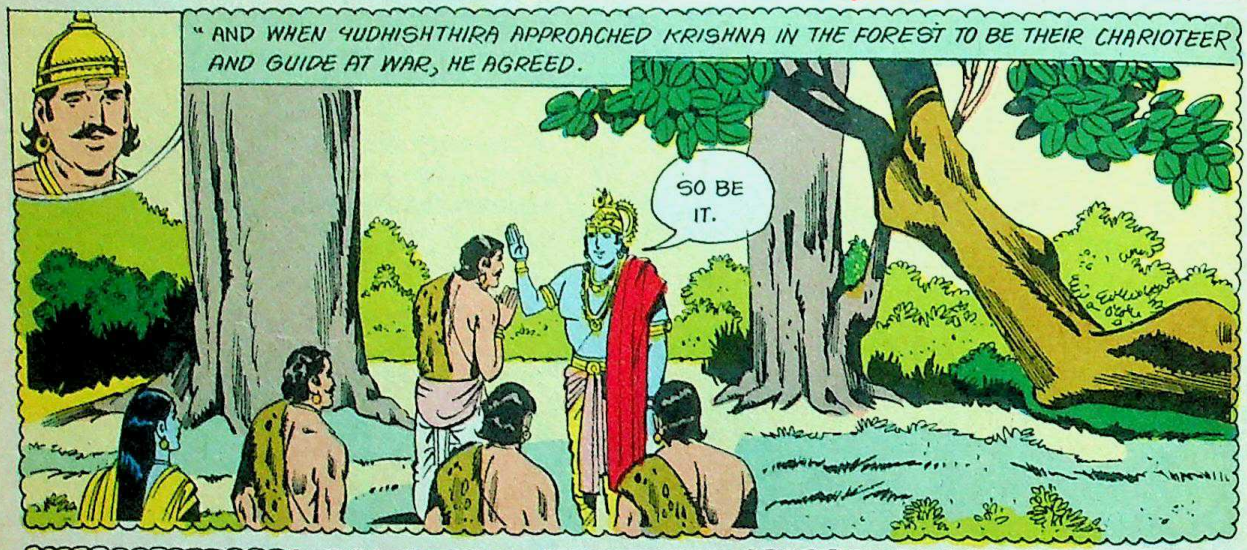

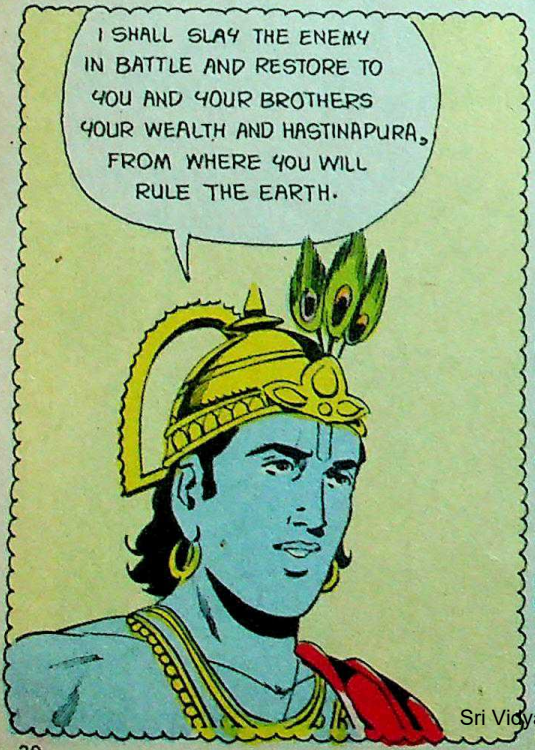

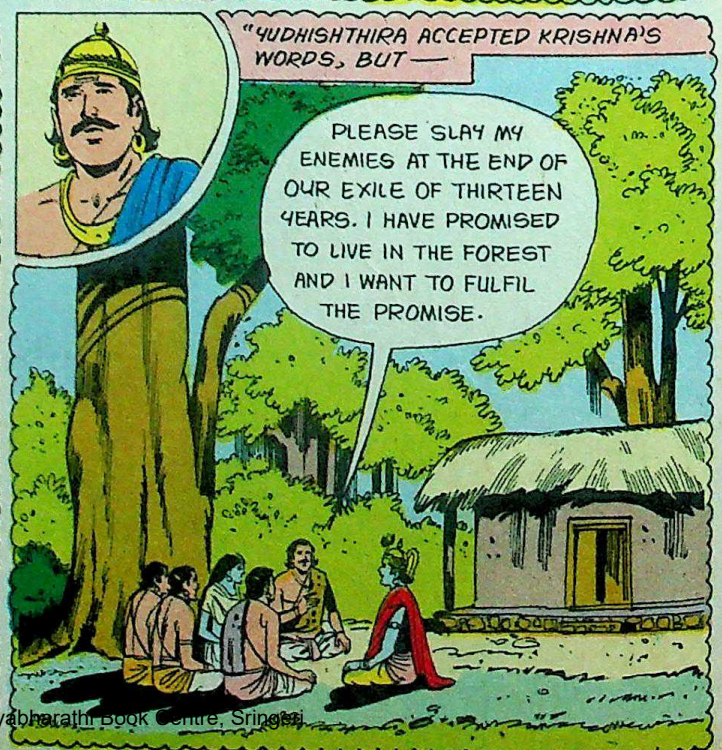

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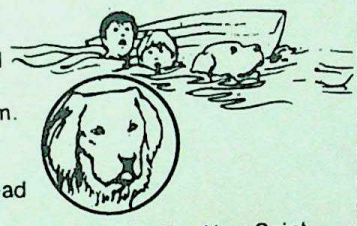
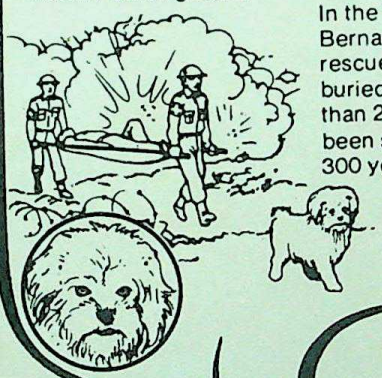
DOGS AND THEIR DARING DEEDS

The dog has always been man's most faithful companion and pet. What's more, it often performs feats of great courage and intelligence to rescue or protect its best friends — human beings.

Ricky was a Welsh sheepdog trained to detect mines (buried bombs) in World War 2. Once, in 1944, an exploding mine badly injured Ricky and his master. No one dared cross the dangerous minefield to help them. Then the wounded Ricky heroically led doctors to his half-dead master, sniffing out a safe path through the mines.

Another amazing rescue story is that of Laddie, a Golden Retriever. In 1947, playing on the beach, he heard a cry . . . and saw two boys in a sinking boat. Laddie instantly swam out to them and let them grab his collar. He then swam back to shore, dragging the boat with him.





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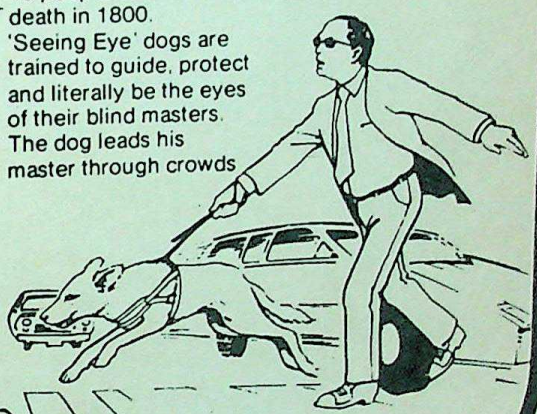

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